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Summer 1985
Volume 29 no 2 (125)
£5.00 $10.00

SURVEY

a journal of East & West studies

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SOLZHENITSYN

Alexander Solzhenitsyn
James F. Pontuso
Michel Heller
Matt F. Oja

UTOPIA REVISITED

Igor Birman
Pedro Ramet
Frederic L. Pryor
Leszek Kolakowski
Francis Fukuyama

AFTER THE 27TH CONGRESS OF THE CPSU

Elliot R. Goodman
Paul Lendvai

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Survey is published under the auspices of the London School of Economics & Political Science

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Ilford House, 133 Oxford Street, London W1R 1TD (Tel. 01-734 0592)

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44 Great Windmill Street, London W1V 7PA (Tel. 01-434 3063)

Annual Subscription
UK £17·00 * Elsewhere £20·00 (including surface postage)
USA $39·00 (air assisted)
* Airmail rates available on request
Per copy UK £5·00 US $10·00 (postage/packing UK 75p US $1·25)

Manuscripts
Articles should be submitted in duplicate to the editorial office. They should be typed in double-spacing and, preferably, conform to the house style of *Survey*.

Copyright © *Survey* 1986 ISSN 0039–6192

Survey magazine is published quarterly by *Survey* Ltd. in association with the
INSTITUTE FOR EUROPEAN DEFENCE & STRATEGIC STUDIES
Produced in cooperation with Freedom House (New York)

Printed in Great Britain by The Eastern Press Ltd., London and Reading

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Solzhenitsyn

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An International Socio-Political Journal

Edited by Ilya Zemtsov

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Issued Quarterly/$40.00

Crane, Russak & Company, Inc.
3 East 44th Street, New York, New York 10017

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Our Pluralists

Alexander Solzhenitsyn

FOR six years I have left their pamphlets, their journals and their symposia unread, although they were rarely without a hostile article intended, partly or wholly, for me. I went on working, far removed from them all, feeling no obligation to get to know them, or to meet and talk with them. Those were the years in which I was busy with my "Knots"[1] and I had no eyes or ears for their attacks and their polemics. Acres of print rang with their ranting. Two dozen tarbrushes bedaubed me from head to foot. A writer in one new *émigré* newspaper expressed surprise on my behalf: why had I made no attempt to defend myself—apparently anybody who felt like it could pitch into me—nothing could be safer. I would patiently suffer all their blows. One suspects that some obscure little clique was just longing for me to grapple with them, and so make them look more important: as it was, they were visibly wasting away, choking on their own poison. If it affected only myself I could comfortably keep this up for another 12 years, and die without having read anything they have written.

But no: the victim of their slander is our people—a people denied freedom of information, denied the right to read and the right to reply. So I had to get down to it, though the task is strange to me and inordinately demanding. I had to obtain and read all their "insights," all their "challenges" and "alternatives," their "new rights" and old lefts, not all of them even up to the mark "syntactically," so to speak.[2] With my three "Knots" completed, I have just read these things for the first time and, fresh from that reading, I am now putting pen to paper.

OF the people I intend to discuss most have left the USSR, some are still there, some belonged to the communist priviligentsia, while others had a taste of the camps. They are united by membership of a fairly longstanding social movement, which lays claim in its polemics to the past and the future of our country. It has no common name, but among its ideological characteristics that which it most often and most readily singles out is "pluralism." I shall, therefore, speak of the "pluralists."

They seem to regard pluralism as somehow the supreme attainment of history, the supreme intellectual good, the supreme value of modern Western life. This principle is often formulated as follows: "the more

[1] Solzhenitsyn's historical epic about the revolution, of which three "Knots" have already been completed; so far only the first two, *August 1914* and *October 1916* have been published.

[2] These are oblique references to the titles of various publications by the "pluralists," including: P. Litvinov, B. Shragin and M. Meyerson—Aksyonov (eds.), *Samosoznaniye* ("Insights", Kronika, New York, 1976); B. Shragin, *Protivostoyanie dukha* ("Challenge of the Spirit", 1977); B. Belotserkovsky (ed.), *Demokraticheskiye Alternativy* ("Democratic Alternatives", 1976); A. Yanov, *The Russian New Right* (1978); *Sintaksis*, a Paris-based *émigré* journal edited by M. Rozanova and A. Sinyavsky.

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different opinions, the better"—the important thing being that no one should seriously insist on the truth of his own.

But can pluralism claim to be a principle valuable in itself, and indeed one of the loftiest? It is strange that mere plurality should be elevated to such a high status. Surely pluralism can serve only as a reminder of the multiplicity of forms—and who would deny that multiplicity?—but of forms which, together, constitute the integral development of mankind? In all the exact sciences, that is to say those with a mathematical base, truth is *singular*, and no one feels outraged by this universal natural order of things. If truth bifurcates, as in some branches of modern physics, what we have are two arms of the same river. Each truth can but reinforce and confirm the other. That is generally understood. Whereas a plurality of truths in the social sciences is an index of our imperfection, not of surplus wealth: why make this deficiency the excuse for a cult of "pluralism"? The *Washington Post* once published a letter from an American, responding to my Harvard speech. "It is difficult to believe," he wrote, "that diversity for its own sake is the highest aim of mankind. Respect for diversity makes no sense unless diversity helps us attain some higher goal."

Of course, variety adds colour to life. We yearn for it. We cannot imagine life without it. But if diversity becomes the highest principle, then there can be no universal human values, and making one's own values the yardstick of another person's opinions is ignorant and brutal. If there is no right and wrong, what restraints remain? If there is no universal basis for it there can be no morality. "Pluralism" as a principle degenerates into indifference, superficiality, it spills over into relativism, into tolerance of the absurd, into a pluralism of errors and lies. You may show off your ideas, but must say nothing with conviction. To be too sure that you are right is indecent. So people wander like babes in the wood. That is why the Western world today is defenceless; paralysed by its inability any longer to distinguish between true and false positions, between manifest Good and manifest Evil, by the centrifugal chaos of ideas, by the entropy of thought. "Let's have as many views as possible—just as long as they're all different!" But if a hundred mules all pull different ways the result is no movement at all.

In the whole universal flux there is one truth—God's truth, and, consciously or not we all long to draw near to this truth and touch it. A great diversity of opinions has some sense if we make it our first concern to compare them so as to discover and renounce our mistakes. To discover the true way of looking at things, come as close as we can to God's truth, and not just collect as many "different" views as we can.

I do not insist that the term I have chosen is the right one. For our present purpose it may serve. And what an intellectual banquet awaits us! How dazzled we shall be by the myriad coruscations, the infinite spectrum of pluralist thought!

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BUT look more closely. Alas, even in some Western countries today pluralism is a slogan, rather than a reality. Educated Western society in our time (and the educated set the trend) is in fact not so very tolerant, least of all of any fundamental criticism of itself; it moves along rigidly defined channels in generally accepted directions. True, it does not curb its dissidents with the cudgel, but with slander and financial pressures. Just try and hack your way through the tangle of prejudices and distortions in any of those brilliant American metropolitan newspapers.

We observe with surprise that as soon as they begin to feel their feet our pluralists take the same path. "Preaching to the democracies about the evils of democracy is a thankless business." A just observation, for which we thank them. But you will obviously get nowhere preaching to totalitarians on the evils of totalitarianism: is democracy then no more open-minded and objective? Our pluralism has been spreading its wings in the West for some years now, with nothing to hinder it (show me if you can who has been denied the chance to "express himself")—but where is the proud procession of refreshing and salutary discoveries? Strange to say, there is nothing but a handful of superficial, flimsy, and what is more, derivative convictions. First and foremost—about Russian history. Russian history "in its entirety," of course, in the broadest of summaries, not in concrete, analytical form.

When I found myself in Switzerland and heard from the local radicals (there are radicals there too, needless to say) that "*your* socialism may be as bad as you say, but *our* socialism will be good," I was astonished, but I made allowances: these over-comfortable people with underdeveloped minds had yet to experience the obscene reality for themselves! But then "living witnesses" arrive in the West from the USSR, and instead of unscrambling Western misconceptions they slanderously lay the blame for communism at the door of accursed Russia and the accursed Russian people. By doing so they aggravate the blindness of the West, and its helplessness against communism. This is the source of all the hard feeling between us.

The extraordinary thing is that people who differ so much in education, in age, and in their capacity for independent thought all join in this earsplitting clamour against Russia. As though there was some arrangement between them. "The Marxist reign of terror is just a variant of the periodic Russian reign of terror."[3] "Stalinist barbarity is a direct continuation of old Russian barbarity." "Tsarism or communism—the enemy remains the same." "Everything fell into the hands of despotism not in 1917, but in 1689" (or in another version 1564). "Russian messianism, under its pseudonym of Marxism." "The division of Russian history into a pre-October and a post-October period cannot go unchallenged. . . ." "Communism is an ideological rationalization of Russian imperialist policy—a more universalist rationalization than Slavophilism or Russian Orthodox Christianity." "1917 brought no

[3] An allusion to the *oprichnina*, a special body created by Ivan the Terrible to destroy the boyars and their power.

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change in Russian policy." "People exaggerate the significance of the October revolution . . . once the original model [of the revolution] was destroyed, Russian history returned to its old orbit." "The seeds of socialism perished in Russian soil." (There I can agree: the soil proved rather hard for socialism, which had to be implanted with the help of the pick-axe.) "Just as before the revolution, so afterwards, evil reigned and the good was suppressed." "There is an unbroken continuity of oppression between Tsarism and Sovietism," "a qualitative resemblance."

GENTLEMEN, come to your senses! Do you realize what nonsense you are foisting on the West, in your malevolence towards Russia? Why are you so intent on duping the West? In old Russia there was no Cheka, no Gulag, no mass rounding-up of the innocent, the population at large were not systematically compelled to swear allegiance to the lie, there was no ritual public criticism, children were not made to disown their parents, no one was punished for having the wrong relations, people chose their occupations freely and were paid for their work, married women in towns did not need to work—a father could feed a family of five or seven children unaided, citizens could move freely from place to place, and—most precious right of all—anyone who wished could emigrate immediately. . . . Yet our philosophers tell us that there is a *qualitative* resemblance between the tsarist and Soviet regimes.

"Christianity is a path untried by Russia." "We may doubt whether the Russian people was truly religious in the past either." (These quotations are taken from a great variety of sources. I shall not name their authors as a rule, though I make a note of the book or journal and the exact page in the margin of my manuscript.) "Russian Orthodoxy is just as superficial as Russian Marxism." "The religion which the Russian people *supposedly* professes" (we are back to Belinsky![4]). "Conscience . . . in our country was always in the position of a step-child." (Can we believe our ears? Can this be about Russia? Where were acts of contrition, public acts of contrition at that, more common? Remember the general detestation of the law's delays, and the way in which merchants and artisans relied on unwritten agreements—would you find much of that in Europe? Recognition of the practice penetrated into state documents: thus, in the reign of Catherine II, in 1778, merchants were required to pay a tax of 1 per cent on "their capital, declared *according to conscience*." But the writers quoted have no insight into the special qualities of the people.) We even read that "the spiritual make-up" of the Russian is inherited from the Mongols: his is a "stagnant" mentality, "incapable of development or progress" (in other words—Russians are *Untermenschen*? A hopeless race?). "The land of uncouth peasants." "The Georgian Stalin comes closer than anyone to the Russian ideal." We read of "Suvorov, the gendarme of Europe, the reactionary

[4] In an open letter to Gogol, Belinsky cast doubt on the religiosity of the Russian people.

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Kutuzov" (rub your eyes: has Pokrovsky[5] risen again? This is the sort of thing people were taught in the '20s). And at every step, in the most various writers, you meet "that genius the Marquis de Custine," "de Custine's magnificent book" (in unison—they have found in this tourist a teacher worthy of them—but why not Théophile Gautier[6] instead?). "Was not Russia the prison-house of peoples? Who can in all conscience deny it?" And whose conscience permitted him to repeat this Leninist obscenity? Why, Shragin's.[7]

He discusses (they all do) with the greatest ease each and every century of Russian history—one minute we're in the thirteenth, the next it's the seventeenth. Where does this soaring erudition come from? Even if he confines himself to Russia, can anyone be equally at home in every century of its history? Feeble creature that I am, I have devoted my whole life to a single year—1917. The secret is simple. Just look at the citations. Shragin does not take the trouble to read the sources, he plucks his quotations from secondary works, from hastily compiled conspectuses, and always from those produced by revolutionary democrats and radicals, and you know what sort of selection they made: for us, they write, conscience was a step child. (I know this weakness only too well. I once burnt my fingers on Plekhanov's *History of Russian Social Thought*. I used the same sort of second-hand quotations. It is very easy to let yourself go with the stream of our liberationist ideology, and see things "as all intelligent people do." Resistance is very difficult. It has sometimes happened to me: and as long as you are going with the stream, you will have the sure and powerful support of a unanimous "*society*.") Chernyshevsky too he quotes, whole pages at a time—too kind of him! These are the foundations on which they base their view that "Russian liberalism begins at the end of the nineteenth century." We learn too that "the idea of 'holy Russia' . . . implies that you and I bear no responsibility for whatever is bad,"—where, I ask, did they dig this up? Was there then no concept of sin in Russia?

Of the people itself we read: "The Russians are a strong people, but their heads are weak" . . . "they are intellectually weak" . . . "The scoundrel, with his broad Russian character . . ." And of Russia as a whole—"what sort of girl is it that *anyone* can violate?" One of their deep thinkers has discovered that (in Russian) the names of all other nations are nouns, and only "Russian" is an adjective! So you don't regard yourselves as human beings?—he smiles. My, how very perceptive! Neither the thinker nor the editor of the journal stopped to think that "Pinsky"[8] and "Sinyavsky" are also adjectives. As is the Russian word

[5] Pokrovsky's works were prescribed orthodoxy until 1934.

[6] In his *Journey to Russia* (1878) Théophile Gautier shows himself sympathetic towards the Russian people.

[7] An ex-Soviet dissident now living in the USA.

[8] Lev Pinsky, who died in Moscow a few years ago, was, under the pseudonym N. Lepin, the author of an article which first raised this point about the word "russky," "a Russian." The ending "sky" in Russian is adjectival. Pinsky's article appeared in the journal *Sintaksis*, No. 7, 1979.

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for "scholar." (The thought seemed so profound to them that in successive numbers of the journal it was attributed to two different people, each of whom claims authorship.)

Still, Russia has some merits too. "Russia differs from Asiatic societies only in that it succeeded in creating an intelligentsia with a European mentality." And of course "the responsibility of the intelligentsia for the depressing events of Russian history has been greatly exaggerated," although the intelligentsia admittedly "conspired to impose their own version of Russia's past and future."

These profound pluralistic investigations have also produced new and important terminology. Instead of "Slavophilism" we now have "Mongolophilism." Then there is "Tartar-Messianic Russia" and "Tartar messianism." Terms so pregnant and enigmatic that someone should offer a prize for the best interpretation. Wherever the insensitive fingers of our investigators palp the lifeless body of old Russia, it is the same story—they feel nothing but revulsion for her. So—Forward! Forward to the future! Forward to the October Revolution! They can't wait to get to October. Can't wait to give us their perfunctory explanation of that too! But wait, I implore you! What of February? Let's do it chronologically. What then of February?

HOW surprising! They feel such revulsion for the country, they are so uncompromising in their judgments, in their condemnations of our depraved people—and they have missed something enormous and obvious. The revolution of February 1917 was the greatest revolution of the twentieth century, an explosion that shook Russia and then the whole world, and it is not so far back in time—not like Filofei and the "Third Rome"—this one and only real revolution Russia ever had (1905 was only an abortive attempt to rock the regime, and October 1917 the effortless overthrow of a regime which had given up in advance)—yet *not one of our opponents deigns to mention this revolution*, let alone carry out research on it. Now, why should this be?

Frankly, because there is nothing they can say about it. It is difficult to describe February in such a way as to show the liberals, the radicals, the intelligentsia in a favourable light. And the second and no less important reason—let me whisper it—is that they *do not know*. They have studied everything before, and after and all around it, they have even studied the sixteenth century, but about February they know nothing. Partly because both the Bolshevik propagandists and their own professors always rushed ahead to October and the international happiness of the peoples freed from the Russian prison-house. Partly because they too pull a face and ignore those eight unpleasant months, which are so hard to justify.

But that, gentlemen, was something like an explosion! It scooped out a great black bomb crater—which you skirt so skilfully on your fleet wings. I, though, have made it my busines to remind people about it. For years and years I have been amassing not quotations from surveys, but pristine

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facts: in which house or on which street in which town, and at what time on which day particular events occurred. I have looked at several hundreds of the most prominent people, of all persuasions, in every sector of public life, and the biography of each of them is examined when I come to describe his actions. The narrative has no main hero, for history knows no such person where millions are set in motion. I have begun publishing chapters from these "Knots," replete with facts and quotations from life, dense, objective, historical material, open for all to discuss, a dozen chapters in all amounting now to some 400 pages in small print.

And what was the result? Something extraordinary! They ignored it completely! Every sentence of mine on current affairs (a tenth of my work) has been turned inside out, sniffed over, glossed, refuted from 10 different angles. But these chapters seem to have escaped their notice. Why don't they grab their pens and peck away? The philosopher Shragin, with his genuine "nostalgia for history" (reaffirmed from book to book) demands, so rightly demands, that we remember, that we recall—well, here's history for him! Let him investigate it, evaluate it, point out the mistakes, criticize it unsparingly, tear it to bits. But no. . . . Because, in the second place, this is not one of those easily assimilated liberal rehashes, a new top dressing on the work of many enlightened minds who have left nothing for us to do but pick examples at random from the fifteenth century, or maybe from the eighteenth, it's all the same. . . . No there's a lot of hard work to do here. You must become a living part of the naked historical reality: like a helpless blade of grass, you feel the ground of history quaking under you. Discussing generalities is very much easier. But also because in the *first* place, this is all extremely unpleasant material, it clashes with their theories and their wishes, it is an unattractive body of knowledge. So—they have ignored it, avoided it, pretended it did not exist.

Not all of them, to be fair. One professor, one of the most fervent pluralists, challenged me to explain a passage which the others had all noticed too: why, in describing a Duma sitting, did I quote the extreme rightist, Markov the Second? (Well, he spoke for over an hour and a half. He was given extra time—how could I take it away from him? I wasn't in the chair. Should I have struck out his speech, and rewritten history to Orwell's prescription?) The professor's main rebuke though was that "there is no sense in arraigning Milyukov or Parvus, say, with the help of hindsight [Stalin—yes, that's a different matter]." Why is it a different matter? And what about Lenin? We are not told. According to another historian, "Parvus' role in the Russian revolution is of no interest to us." So now we know! So much for their "nostalgia for history"! Indeed, they can even write that "there is nothing to be gained by scratching sores which already itch unbearably."

Well, well! I seem to be hearing from the democratic pluralists just what I heard from the communist toughs with the big sticks when *Ivan Denisovich* erupted. (That's as far as they let me go—they weren't having

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Gulag.) "*You shouldn't remember*!" they told me. "*Why rake up the past*? It's so painful, it's like rubbing salt into old wounds."

Well, some future February will be all the more dangerous to us if we do not remember that February in the past. And in Russia's fatal hour of need it will be all the easier to bury her in empty verbiage once again. You say you don't need to remember? Well, *we* do, because we don't want to see in Russia a repetition of the disorders that spread like wildfire and reduced the country to chaos in a matter of eight months. We prefer to take responsibility for our country's fate. We prefer that human existence should be marked by firmness and steadiness, not palsied dithering.

If people form such ignorant and facile judgments on 1917 it is because they cannot visualize that year. (Some bold spirits imagine eventualities scarcely less fantastic than a Martian invasion: what if "the Black Hundreds[9] had taken over"? . . .) The indiscipline of the people, encouraged by the permissiveness of half-baked intellectuals from February on, before the Bolsheviks were on the scene, is now represented as authentic outbreak of age-old class resentment, of which the Bolsheviks were only obedient and convenient mouthpieces.

Which makes the conspiratorial *coup* in October "a popular rebellion!" "The leaders of the October *coup* were in fact consciously carrying out the wishes of the masses" (whose wishes then were the leaders of the February revolution realizing?) . . . "They had never lost contact with the grass roots" (!—not even in Geneva and other similar places, in the delirium of social-democratic polemics). "Both the revolution and its consequences are national in character." (So why, gentlemen and comrades, why did you leave the Soviet Union? You can say such things openly, in print, as freely there as anywhere.) "The insurgent people overthrew the democracy of the intelligentsia with the aid of Lenin's party"—the Leninists too, innocent lambs, are rehabilitated! Some pluralists even tell us, with a catch in their voices, that "the development of Marxism was brought to a halt by the October revolution." "The October revolution," reflects one philosopher, "systematically and at every single point refuted all the certainties of Marxism." (The Marxist "science of insurrection"? The seizure of banks, of the telegraph network, and of power? The dictatorship of the "avant garde"? The class struggle? Atheism as the core of their ideology? The need to lay low the "gendarme of Europe"? . . . I could go on.) "The October revolution was an eruption of Asiatic substance." Another philosopher, however, contradicts this: "until the old Bolsheviks were destroyed, the spirit of democracy hovered over the Central Committee and the Cheka." As you'd have seen if they'd got their hands on you!

AFTER the October *coup* my survey branches out in different directions. Our pluralists are completely unanimous in condemning old Russia and ignoring February; but after October they permit

[9] An extreme anti-semitic right-wing organization of the pre-1917 period.

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themselves some (though not a very wide) variety of opinion. As a result they make less desperately dreary reading than I had feared. You come across things that are neither badly written nor malicious in intent.

You come across this sort of thing: "Lenin was above all a genius, and there is no doubt that subjectively his intentions were honest. . . . He still casts a powerful spell in Russia, everybody reveres him and pays homage to him." (Recognize it? This heartfelt tribute comes from Levitin-Krasnov.[10]) "Lenin was not a murderer like Stalin or Hitler" (says an heiress to the Revolutionary Democrats. This in fact is so generally acknowledged that even Western radio stations have been instructed not to criticize Lenin for fear of losing their Soviet audience!) "The word 'Soviet' is firmly established in Russia and evokes no negative emotions in the majority of the population." "A Soviet 'nation' exists . . . *the positive ideals of 'Sovietism'*" (these words belong to the heir of a communist ring leader). "Communist internationalism is a worldwide movement with aims shared by all mankind" (according to the proselyte M. Mihajlov[11])—and not "an eruption of Asiatic substance." . . . Further, "the Bolsheviks just adopted the very reasonable and moderate Socialist Revolutionary programme" on the agrarian question (they just confiscated the land and the crops). True, "the ruling party did violence to its *ideals*" (I'm embarrassed too, but that's what Shragin says). "The Party itself degenerated and became moribund." "The Party which I" (a woman writer) "had joined so joyfully has long ceased to exist." Let us get this straight: the Party which, young activists and all, committed the first cannibalistic murders in Kiev in 1918, and the Party which is doing the same thing today in Ethiopia and Angola, are one and the same. But although "I cannot say why things happened as they did," still "no one will ever make me renounce my past." What a remarkable capacity for development! Then again, "the Soviet attitude to literature and to creative thought is certainly not an expression of Soviet ideas." Are we to conclude that it is part of Russian tradition? Retreating gradually uphill, they stand fast on the argument that the Soviet government is "not the foulest" on our planet. (Why not tell us, then, which is fouler?)

The pluralists are not coy about the history of their enlightenment and intellectual enrichment: "the new intelligentsia" dates from the 20th Congress of the CPSU. "In 1953 hardly anybody was aware of the realities." (They pretend that the people are utterly stupid. Tens of millions had learnt how things really were—but had lost their lives by then, or learnt to hold their tongues. Only the time-serving elite were "unaware.") But then, in 1953, it was "as though a cataract had fallen from the eyes of us intellectuals." (You would think they'd be ashamed to see it in print. Those who waited for the 20th Congress to "open their

[10] A militant Christian who holds socialist beliefs. After periods of internment in labour camps he emigrated from the USSR to Switzerland.

[11] A Yugoslav dissident of Russian origin. After several stretches in prison he emigrated to the USA. Mihajlov's books include *Planetarnoye Soznaniye* ("Planetary Consciousness", Ardis, Ann Arbor, 1982).

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eyes" are the real slaves: if the executioners themselves had not revealed all those millions of crimes they never would have guessed.)

Mihajlov again, from his remote vantage point, made this discovery before any of them: "the assertion that Marxist-Leninist ideology is to blame for it all does not stand up to criticism. . . . Ideology determined nothing." Whole classes were destroyed, 20 million people at a time, but this, it seems, was merely the result of "the appetite for power." "The fight against religion is waged not for reasons of ideology, but for the sake of power"—obviously no regime in our day can survive without destroying believers! "Ideology has never [even in the days of the Comintern] determined the Kremlin's foreign policy"! American politicians too tear each other's throats in their "appetite for power", so what happens in the USSR is all easily understood, all familiar, all quite normal, and the West has nothing to fear. Anyway, our "planetary" author calls the ideology of "world revolution or the building of socialism" "progressive," so there is less reason than ever to be afraid of it.

Shragin, deepest thinker of them all, tries hard to persuade us that "the blame lies not with Marxist ideology, but with ourselves." Of course it does—in some higher sense the blame is ours. For every sin to which we succumb—if for instance we teach Marxism-Leninism in a higher educational institution—we ourselves are chiefly to blame. If 50 per cent of mankind has been swallowed by communism, if another 35 per cent is slithering down the same slope, if a further 15 per cent is teetering on the brink—the 50 per cent, 35 per cent and 15 per cent must themselves bear the blame. But does that mean that ideology has nothing to do with it? If we die from poison, even if we take it of our own free will, this means that our organism was too feeble to withstand it, but not that what we took was not poison.

WHAT then did we gain from this supposedly greatest and internationally most significant action of all time? Well, it goes without saying that "what is called socialism in our country" is in fact "state capitalism." "What is called socialism in our country is a typically Asiatic [and that means also typically Russian] product." "The internal structure of the USSR has *nothing in common* with socialism," "the society they set out to build was quite different" (you should have lived under so-called war communism, when a people were drowned in barges, and every other inhabitant of the Crimea was shot). "Communism in Russia is already a thing of the past" (let's hope this is a prophetic statement!) because, you see, Stalin ruined and destroyed true communism! They draw the crudest and most hackneyed picture of Stalin, that peddled in the West for the past quarter of a century, ever since the 20th Congress when "the cataract fell away" from all those eyes. (Russian-language radio stations take their word for it and relay this hot news in awed voices to the USSR.)

None of the pluralists has ventured to paint a detailed picture of communism's vain attempt to establish itself on Russia's boggy soil. But

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they do give us some priceless snippets. "People who went on calling [towns and streets] by their old names were not in danger of arrest or execution or even dismissal." (This is in the context of a despicable allegation that the Russian people are cattle and would not put up a fight for their own past.) What short memories they have! There was danger all right. One little slip of the tongue—just say "Tver" or "Nizhny Novgorod"—and see where you'd be! That was how my Tveritinov[12] came to grief—and his is an authentic case. If you asked your way to "Taganrog Prospect" instead of "Budyonny" you would be taken straight to the militia station, and there was no knowing whether you would return. "The psychological hostility between the intelligentsia and the people during the terror of the '30s and '40s. . . ." "It is no accident that the victims of party purges came to be called 'enemies of the people'." "The Russian intelligentsia sins against itself" (and not against the people). "The intelligentsia was ill-informed, and divided by mutual distrust and fear" (as though the masses were well-informed, and not similarly divided). Besides, it was not from the Soviet intelligentsia that the "crushers" were drafted, though a few of them, quite a few, could be found in the prosecutors' offices and the Cheka. (Especially when "the spirit of democracy hovered over the Cheka.") And amongst the ardent Party and Komsomol activists and delators in the '20s and '30s? "Bolshevism is represented as a natural creation of the intelligentsia, but this is incorrect." (Not very pretty, this—a bit like disowning a convicted brother in 1937. Never once in the revolutionary years did revolutionary democrats slander the Bolsheviks in this way: they, quite rightly, felt the Bolsheviks to be part of themselves, which is why they were incapable of fighting them.) And what about the liquidation of the kulaks—15 million of them—against which the intelligentsia never protested? Some intellectuals, indeed, trickled into the countryside with the brigades of urban communists. They might at least blush for it, but no—"the peasants themselves were carried away by their dekulakization campaign." (Unbelievable! We owe this smear to an eminent dissident.) "The *kolkhoz* is a purely Russian institution." (Discernible through the ages: the sowing plan sent down from the city, the labour brigades, payment in pencil marks on paper, corn clipping in the dead of night.) "Only the Russians and Chinese could find this a natural social order."

We're back with the "natural," everlasting slavishness of Russians about which so much noise has been made. Our pluralists, though, are not "slaves"—oh dear, no! Yet they are not part of the underground either, not insurrectionaries. They could be content with the present form of government and with the present constitution, if it were "honestly implemented." It wasn't just a ploy when they called on the government to "observe its own laws." They go on writing in emigration just as they wrote in the USSR: "the defenders of human rights did not aim at establishing a completely new political system in the Soviet Union

[12] Featured in Solzhenitsyn's short story *An Incident at Krechetovka Station*. (See p. 201 of Alexander Solzhenitsyn's *Stories and Prose Poems*, trans. Michael Glenny, Bodley Head, 1971.)

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or even changing the existing system in any definite way." They have no affinity with the militants of the White movement (drawn from the "slavish people"), nor with the peasant partisans of 1918–1922, nor with the Don and Ural Cossacks ("slaves," all of them), nor with the league for the Defence of the Motherland and of Freedom in the Moscow underground, nor with the insurgents of Yaroslavl and Izhevsk, nor with the "Kuban saboteurs"[13]—these are all on our side. My *Ivan Denisovich* wouldn't give house room to the 20th Congress. The target of that book was not "infringements of Soviet legality" but the communist regime itself. On our side we did not share the wisdom of Pomerants,[14] did not know that we must not fight against indurated evil, that it would expire unaided in 200 years time, did not know that resistance to the attempted communist *coup* in Indonesia had been wrong, because resistance had "brought about the massacre." In that case should our own Civil War never have been started either? Perhaps we should have surrendered to the authors of the *coup* immediately? "Let Providence find a way to save what can yet be saved." It is wrong then to fight against the ruthless power which in our own day is deluging Laotians and Afghans with yellow rain, and targeting huge numbers of rockets on Europe? Of course, if you live in the Soviet Union you have to choose your words with care. But you need not go to quite such lengths. It is, in fact, the sincere belief of many pluralists that communism is not an evil. While we, whether we fight or not, are "slaves" just the same. And "the revolution in Russia was and is national in character."

So much for the "nostalgia for history." See how the shimmering charms of pluralism fade like a mirage. Pluralism may exist somewhere in this world, but alas, it is beyond the reach of our authors. So then, pluralism divided into many streams, but for long, not for any great distance: here they are, united again, flowing in a single current along the old familiar channel. "This corruption of men's souls has nothing specifically communist about it." "Russian socialism set in a form peculiar to that particular people." "Stalin was possible only because Russians needed a new Tsar-God." "From under the communist mask the old Russian state tradition peeps out," and Soviet society "has taken on the structural contours of the Muscovite tsardom." "A cunning Tartar mechanism." The Bolshevik "defication of technology is a mutation of superstitious peasant Orthodoxy." (To think that the author of this gibberish could enter the priesthood.) "Russia built a state of its own, for the people," and got just what it wanted: party and people are one, sovereignty belongs to the whole people, the regime is upheld by the people—this, which we can read in *Pravda* just as well, is the main article of belief common to all pluralists, this is the constant refrain of Zinoviev. How one-dimensional it has made itself, this pluralism: it has diminished itself into mere hatred of Russia, and nothing more.

[13] Allusions to various workers' and peasants' rebellions between 1918 and 1922.

[14] A historian specializing in the Far East and author of a number of philosophical works disseminated by *samizdat*; he is resident in Moscow.

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So surely have the different currents merged in a single channel, that in a dozen of their most important books you will not meet the term "USSR." It is Russia, Russia all the time. You might almost think that it was for sentimental reasons. And the more obvious it is that they really mean the USSR, the more they enjoy writing about it as though it were Russia: "*Russia* today does many dirty things, and it may do still more in the future." Sometimes, though, their scholarly conscience will trouble them: "Russia—oh, all right then, the Soviet Union—that's just a terminological trick." What, then, of the other 30 countries under communist rule? Do they also have the "structural contours of the Muscovite state?" The more philosophical of them have an ingenious answer to this: "it is generally backward countries, with no experience of democratic development, that are inclined to the Russian variant." Isn't that a comfort! Isn't that encouraging! It describes 85 per cent of the countries in the world, so that the "cunning Tartar-messianic mechanism" has an assured future. While the remaining 15 per cent will have socialism in its utterly marvellous form—except that they will be swallowed first. The outlook is a bleak one.

PROGNOSES? In the future "totalitarianism may even jettison atheism." (Says Mihajlov. It may be a long wait. Does anyone renounce the very foundation of his existence? Neither Marx nor Lenin hated anyone more savagely than God.) "The idea that a spiritual renascence is in progress in Russia is laughable." Liberation from totalitarianism and national renascence "have nothing to do with each other." "As a social being the Russian will always remain a slave." Programmes for the future? "There is every reason to hope that there will be a repetition of February and of the free elections to the Constituent Assembly" (if you can call them elections) "and no enemies of the pluralist order will be able to dismiss it." Some of them suppose that this will happen without revolution (which makes the reference to February puzzling), others (e.g. Plyushch) undisguisedly long for a revolution, which will change "both the political sphere and the economy." Some think the best way out is "as Lenin proposed"!—to elect "a hundred ordinary workers" to the present Central Committee—(we are not told why Lenin did not do it himself when he held power)—we need, and can find, engineers and experts, not however from amongst the population at large, but only from the most important enterprises and institutes, and of course they must all be Party members, and in this way the USSR, or rather Russia, will be saved. Because, you see, "for a great and educated people all roads lead to democracy, and what is more to a democracy based on socialist ideals." The people has not acquired democratic skills? Never mind—it has learnt "the need for democracy." One of them soars to still more daring heights, with a plan to introduce Western arbitration (backed by armed force, obviously) between contending groups or classes in transitional Russia. (Far away over the ocean he must have lost any feel he ever had for the real balance of forces, or he could not concoct

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such fantasies.) You can even find this sort of thing: "it is imperative to preserve the state planning system, *until we complete the transition to communism*" (my italics).

Or take—once again—our dizzy planetarist. He refuses to contemplate any solution to the problem of our future within the confines of one country: "no single people would be left in peace for as much as a year and a half to devote itself to its internal needs." (Heaven preserve us from such a future! Life wouldn't be worth living.) Mankind is undergoing "preparation for world unification," "there is no turning back on the path of planetarization," it is good-bye to "so-called 'national consciousness'," "there will be no nation states anywhere in the world." Will there then be a single world government?

A terrifying picture. Think what an utter shambles the UN is now, its irresponsibility, its biased voting, its powerlessness to take any constructive step, its failure to solve a single serious problem in all its 40 years: are we to endow it with executive as well as parliamentary powers? Even in little countries, where everything is open to scrutiny, hidden corruption and scandals constantly come to light. Suppose someone wanted to tell the loud mouthed universal Areopagus about the needs of his remote region, could he even make himself heard? Everything would be in alien, uncaring, perhaps dishonest hands. It would be the end of life on earth. If the "Swiss" principle, that local administrations should be more powerful than central government, were taken seriously, what would there be left for a world government to do? Nothing at all. So what is the point of it?

But back to the intelligentsia. The fact is that "simply by existing the intelligentsia asserts the rights of the individual," and "for that very reason has always been and remains alien to the people." . . . Anyway, "their protest is individual, they do not want followers." Indeed, "only demagogues, who toss 'the people' slogans utterly different from their real intentions, can carry the masses with them." So now you know. What price then democratic values? What do we mean by a democratic election? Don't get excited, our ultramontane democrat says soothingly: "the most specious, demagogic, corrupt elections in any American state are incomparably superior in a moral, spiritual and Christian sense to anything in the *whole* [author's italics] centuries-long history of the Russian autocracy." Because "the ideology of a democratic society is determined by its striving towards God." . . . (And this is *the same author* who tried to tell us that Marxist-Leninist ideology was to blame for nothing, because "ideology determined nothing.") Yet "it is quite legitimate to doubt whether the monopoly of the Catholic Church in Poland would be much better than the monopoly of the Communist Party." And here's another: "Terrorists appear only where democratic appearances mask some form of inequality before the law, or in other words a hidden authoritarianism." Since terrorists swarm in greater numbers in Western Europe than anywhere else, then . . . Work it out for yourself.

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NONE of what has been said here about pluralists applies to the main body of the third, Jewish, emigration in the United States. A circle of writers in their Russian-language newspapers and with them their readers, have left our pluralists far behind in their understanding of the West. They see America's sores more and more clearly, and speak of them more and more plainly. When they arrived in that country what these people most wanted was not to theorize about democracy, but to see an elementary form of ordered government. The pluralists were so sure of this rearguard—but how glaringly their rear is now exposed! They now openly complain that the Jewish *émigrés* find American freedoms dangerously excessive. It is impossible to read without a smile one leading pluralist's complaints, his indignation at the sober wishes of the new emigration: that some limits should be set to the interference of public opinion in government business, that the power of the executive should be strengthened and that of the legislature reduced; that state military secrets should be more effectively safeguarded, that propaganda for communism should be a punishable offence, that the police should be freed from exaggerated legal restrictions, that court proceedings should not be trammelled by hypertrophied forensic formalism when a criminal is obviously guilty, that people should stop harping on the rights of man, and put more emphasis on his duties; that patriotic ways of thinking should be inculcated in the young (Help! What is going on? Where on earth are we?), that pornography should be prohibited, sexual laxity discouraged, the use of drugs by young people eradicated; and they have much more to say in the same vein—about the decay of the educational system, for instance, and the moral destruction of children. But all this amounts to a complete demolition of those ideas about democracy at its loftiest and broadest which our pluralists brought with them from Moscow! They arrived saying that "since Watergate America has cleansed itself of the filth of the Vietnam war"—and now they are in despair: "the majority of *émigrés* are anti-democratic in their attitudes," "an anti-democratic outlook is seen as the only possibility," "Solzhenitsyn's pronouncements are accepted by the majority in our emigration as statements of the obvious," "why are the anti-democrats coming to the top among those who have left the Soviet Union?". Once again, I fear, I must point to a contrast: some of the writers in Jewish *émigré* papers and journals do not hide the fact that they are steeped in Russian culture, in Russian literature, and out and out attacks on Russia are noticeably rarer in their writings. They have discovered in themselves a profound affinity with Russia such as they had never previously suspected. Not so the pluralists. Having "chosen freedom" they must make a splash in the ocean of self-indulgent verbiage with their discovery that Russians, for all their culture, are slaves, and slaves they will remain.

IT is both sad and funny, the way in which our pluralists lay their complaints and their hopes at the feet of the West, blindly unaware

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that the West itself is on the eve of its destruction, and no longer capable of defending itself. They rush, some more busily than others, to advise the West how to behave towards communism. But instead of the expected broad pluralist spectrum, we find once again a quite dismal uniformity. We have seen already that according to some of them communism is not to blame for what happens in the USSR, while others believe that what exists there isn't communism at all. "Fighting against communism is a pointless expenditure of effort." The hard and dangerous work, of standing out against the living threat of communism once again, and next time, and eternally—they leave to others. For themselves they see more immediate tasks. "It is logically impossible to prove that the Russian variety of communism is the only one possible." "Who knows, a velvet-gloved communism may be possible?" "What have we to fear? Why draw an exaggerated picture of a universal evil? . . . They too began by fighting for the good." (Pomerants. I would go further: in country after country, right now and right before our eyes, people begin by fighting for the good with the help of automatic rifles and rockets.) The European Marxist Communist parties, it seems, are "a serious threat to the Soviet Union." "I do not wish to greet Eurocommunism's first steps with an anathema." . . . "A phenomenon as important as Eurocommunism." . . . (Which, however, evaporated almost as they spoke.) Yes, Eurocommunism is our hope, and the threat is "the Russian nationalist gang," which has everything ready to replace Brezhnev in the USSR.

Here the broad spectrum of pluralism becomes still more uncomfortably narrow. "The problem of nationalism" is a great favourite in their publications, and even when they gathered in Boston recently for what was alleged to be a literary conference they immediately wandered off onto that subject. A few lonely voices (not those of the philosophers whose names fill this chapter) urged—and were condemned for urging—that some attempt be made to understand this notorious "nationalism." Perhaps even to form an alliance with it. No! Never! was the peremptory reply of those in charge, some of whom took the floor to say it twice. They reaffirmed the unanimous recommendation which for so many years has flowed unchallenged along pluralist channels and into Western ears. Russians must not, repeat not, be allowed to feel themselves a nation again!

What hope has the West of understanding it all? If *Russians themselves* warn of the danger of "Orthodox fascism" why should the West not believe them? There would be "a cross over the prison-house instead of a red flag," says Sinyavsky. Surely the "gentle Christian from the USSR," (*Stern*), the "Slavophile," (*Die Weltwoche*) who has more than once publicly described himself as an Orthodox Christian, would hardly speak of his own side in such a way without good reason? Pluralists had tentatively pointed out before him that "our intelligentsia has every reason to be prejudiced against Orthodoxy" and that the Orthodox Church must above all "regain the trust of the intelligentsia"—in other words, Orthodoxy still has to earn its place in the ranks of pluralism. Or consider

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"Dreams at Orthodox Eastertime."[15] The title is most reassuring, the author is fairly bursting with Orthodox religious sentiment. This is no naive essayist, without hidden depths. He can have a dream just when it is needed, he can manipulate a word, turn a paragraph or a sentence so that the freakish effects he requires seem to come not from him, but from someone unidentifiable. "The cross over the prison-house instead of the red flag." Who said that now, and where? Keep guessing. He is good at scaremongering: "*these are the alternatives—either the world will live, or* Russia will." (Even the language is cranky: he uses an archaic form of a Russian word side by side with the foreign loanword "alternative.") Any sensible person will recoil in horror. Are things that bad? And does this warning come from a Russian? What way out, what choice is the rest of the world implicitly offered, if it wants to survive?

No pluralist will protest, and tell him to stop. After all—there is no truth, and nobody knows "what should be done" and "what should not be done."

Unsuspecting Americans are offered a wantonly distorted version of our older history, in which Ivan the Terrible, Peter I and Stalin stand up like the three arches of a viaduct, over centuries of Russian history drowned in the featureless bog below. And what can we say of the reckless and dishonest use of the term "neo-Slavophiles" (invented, like "slavophiles" in the nineteenth century, by their opponents as a derisory nickname)? I do not know a single real live Slavophile in Russia today. There are patriots who love their dying motherland—why not call them patriots, straightforwardly? Yet if some "professional historian" urgently needs a twentieth-century Slavophile at the end of his pen he doesn't even look at the most prominent of them—Dmitri Shipov[16] or Alexander Samarin[17]—but plumps for the nonentity Sharapov and blows the dust from him into our eyes. That's how they put history up for grabs! When the bloody revolution took place in Iran, our honest and educated pluralists blared in a brazen *tutti* that Orthodoxy is just the same as Islamic fundamentalism, only even bloodier. They cobble up their fairy-tales about doves and hawks in the Kremlin, about the promising younger generation of leaders replacing their elders, about the possibility of curbing and steering the Soviet Union by trading with its "dynamic managers"—a corner shopkeeper's analysis. From such material they construct their rickety prognoses—and free, democratic America will never dare doubt them to the very day of its destruction. We read for instance in leading American publications of "Brezhnev the peace-maker" (before his incursion into Afghanistan), we read that "Soviet aggression is an old wives' tale," we read that "nothing remains of communism but words." Our pluralists have such a blinkered view of things that, like the West, they fail to see communism marching over

[15] An article by Andrei Sinyavsky, *Sintaksis*, No. 8, 1980.

[16] A liberal politician (1851–1920), one of the founders of the "Octobrists." Solzhenitsyn devotes several pages of *October 1916* to him.

[17] A high official of the Holy Synod, Alexander Dmitrievich Samarin (1869–1932) was one of the most important figures in Russian religious and social life at the turn of the century.

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mountain ranges and oceans, crushing yet another nation at every stride, fail to see that it will soon smother all mankind, and pluralism with it. No! Our pluralists will tell you instead about that perfidious messianism which is supposed to have fired the Russian people from the fifteenth century to the twentieth, about benighted Orthodoxy, about the rottenness of Russia's history (relieved only by the years of Leninist idealism), about the obscurantism of all nationalist trends and teachings, about the age-old brutishness of the common people, and about that new danger to all mankind—a Russia restored to health, which will inevitably become a still more terrible totalitarian state.

The nimblest of them are quick to ingratiate themselves with the West and splutter out their warnings: the Russian nationalists and the regime are "fraternally united"! There is a "rapprochement between the 'right-wing dissidents' and the official New Right"!

The rapprochement of jailer and prisoner. The regime has condemned one of its "brothers," Ogurtsov, to rot for a first term of seven years and sent him to his death in a lumber camp at the back of beyond. It has sent its "brother" Osipov to rot, and added a further eight years to his first term of seven years to make sure. It has imprisoned its "brother" Borodin for a second term. This is not how it treats its pluralist enemies—those free-thinking journalists who have been allowed to leave for the West, or its ill-wisher Sinyavsky, "the only dangerous *émigré* writer" (as *Stern* learnt from its interview with him), who was released from the camp before he had served his time. (He offers alternative views of himself: "he was on bad terms with the camp administration" [*Le Monde*, 7 July 1979], but elsewhere we read "for good behaviour" [*Stern*, October 1981].)

The victory of the "New Right," we are told, would mean "the end of *détente* and the stepping up of the arms race" (can it be stepped up any further?), its aim is "to restore Stalinism" and "combine Leninism with Orthodoxy." Journalistically joined, the happy pair take off with a bang: "the Secret Russian Party is very powerful and is gaining control everywhere," "it has its own Central Committee, its shadow cabinet, the centre in Moscow has an iron grip on the provinces," even "the Society for the Preservation of Ancient Monuments is linked with the KGB," and "the sinister role of the Russian Party is particularly conspicuous in that Society." Who, we may ask, but this nationalist gang could think of destroying the Russian North—plundering its rivers, flooding great expanses, and lovingly leading the Russian people to extinction? "There is a tendency for the KGB and the Russian Party to become coextensive," although "the founding members of the Russian Party are chiefly journalists and writers" (they seem to have slipped here—this doesn't sound so scary). Come on, let's do the job properly: "The Russian nationalists are quite simply fascists, using German methods." "The Russian Party is on the way to being a fascist-nationalist party." "They shamelessly copy arguments and procedures which their German *brothers in arms* once used."

The West will not flinch. There can be no doubt about its reaction. The

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Russians must be destroyed. As for communism—it is in eclipse, it has vanished from sight. (So that it is even possible to use Chinese help.)

These insistent calls to arms are published not in Russian, not for *émigrés*, but for American simpletons, and they do mould opinion, they do have an effect. Afghanistan? Poland? The West addresses its curses not to the Soviet Union but to Russia, and instead of correcting it the pluralists encourage it. "Russian imperialism" is to blame, "responsibility for the Soviet Union's hard line in foreign policy rests with the Russian Party," that amalgam of convicts and marshals. Foolishly, mindlessly, they push the West along Hitler's path: the fight is not against communism but against the Russian people.

Lies and trickery were the last things we were led to expect in the pluralist spectrum. Surely they could have been left to Soviet propaganda? No, the pluralists have taken them over as their birthright.

PARTLY because Moscow and Leningrad are so insensitive to the sufferings of the countryside and the provincial towns (the rest of the country has been plundered for half a century so that these two cities could be showered with blessings and suborned) our educated ignoramuses are blind and deaf to the realities of the nation's life, they have not learnt to see and have no wish to see the real, the tremendous changes taking place: what is happening to the country's water, its air, its soil, the poisoned food, the collapse of the family, the decline of population, Brezhnev's latest assault on the countryside, the destruction of what little remained of the peasant's traditional ways. They do not see that a people 270 million strong lives on the miserable level of an African country, working for little or nothing, do not see the nightmarishly poor health service, the grotesque educational system, do not see the children and adolescents deprived of their parents, do not see the country's mineral wealth wantonly sold abroad. . . . Read the journals and symposia of our pluralists—are these the things they worry about? If they have any real concern for Russia—why do they *not so much as mention* these things? For the Slav peoples in our country today, there is one very simple central question: are they to die out, or have they a future on this earth? We shall find none of our pluralists agonizing over this. Just as their fathers and predecessors calmly overlooked the devastation which was already under way in the Leninist years, the total depopulation of the Volga region, the genocide called collectivization, the famine in the Ukraine and the Kuban, the fresh contingents streaming into the Gulag after the war (they noticed the Party purges of 1937, the "homeless cosmopolitans" campaign, and the "doctors' affair" as they occurred, but nothing else), so today our pluralists fail to notice that Russia is dying, that it is already half-dead, a semi-corpse: they swarm like a troop of mischievous gnomes over the prostrate body, twittering the only tune they know. For the credulous West they produce a version of our modern history in which the *démarches* of dissidents are the milestones. By exaggerating the importance of metropolitan dissidents, and of the *émigre*

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movement, they have diverted the world's attention from the basic conditions of the common people's life in our country: all that matters is whether that murderous regime is observing its own mendacious laws. After their own timely exit what now concerns them is whether unlimited freedom of speech will triumph the very day after the present regime is overthrown by . . . (by whom?) And how extensive are the territories over which their free thoughts will flutter tomorrow? They do not stop to ask themselves how they will build the house to do their thinking in. Will they have a roof over their heads? (And will there be real, not *ersatz*, butter in the shops?)

Their number includes so many specialists in the humanities—why then do they put forward no concrete social proposals? Reasonable ones might have converted us long ago! Instead of glorifying yourselves as uncompromising democrats (and calling all who think differently authoritarians), just spell out in concrete terms what sort of democracy you recommend for the Russia of the future. To say "in general the same as in the West" is to say nothing: whether we think of America, of Switzerland or of France, everything is adapted to one particular country, and there is nothing general about it. What electoral system do you propose? Proportional representation? Election by simple majority? Or by absolute majority? (The choice of system drastically changes the composition of parliament: large minorities can be "swallowed" without trace, or on the contrary it may be impossible ever to form a stable government.) Should the government be responsible to the chambers, or not (as in the United States)? These different arrangements have completely different effects. If, for instance, a parliamentary majority is obliged to support "its own" government for purely party reasons—doesn't that leave us once more with subordination of public opinion to a political party? What degree of decentralization do you favour? Which matters fall within the competence of regional and of central government respectively? "Democracy" involves decisions on many details of this sort—and we have yet to hear a view on any of them. No one ever makes a concrete proposal, no one ever gets beyond "the universal rights of man."

And what of the transition period? Whichever Western system we prefer—how do we adopt it? By what procedure—if we do not want our country to turn upside down and founder? If there are outbreaks of robbery and murder (as in March 1917—and this time it would begin sooner), should the bandits be stopped? (Or should their rights be respected? Perhaps they're not legally responsible for their actions?) If so, who is to do it? On whose authority? And with what forces? More generally, what if spontaneous disorders and large-scale fighting flare up? Who will calm people down and how will they be saved from a blood-bath?

Our pluralists show no concern for any of these things.

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WHY bother about them, some will say. In Russia no importance is attached to these hollow rumblings in the West, and they are certainly not thought of as a threat to our real future.

If the happenings of 1917 were not still burning my fingers, I should probably attach no importance to such people either. But in some ways things are beginning to look very much as they did then. We have experienced it all once before. We should remember those who bemused us with their prattle in 1917 while they paved the way to a bright future for that "country of slaves." They spin their threads around and around—but what if they should once again tighten about our necks and blindfold us as before? Russia has not yet begun to think—but they are already trying to direct its thoughts. They give a little push whenever they can, using Russian-language radio stations to steer those left behind in the right direction.

Someone will tell me that these are minor figures, compared with those of 1917. But, when you come to look at it, were those others really such big men? History is made by those whom history lets into the arena. The present batch do not, indeed, measure up even to the liberal-democratic *émigrés* of the '20s in stature, in the quality of their thought, or in experience of public life—but how much greater are their opportunities. Their predecessors lived from hand to mouth, worked themselves to death to make a hundred francs, did not know where they would lay their heads from one night to the next. It could take them years to get an article published in a major French or American journal. These new people set up their own publishing houses, start one magazine after another (by now enough of them are published in the West to supply all Russia), travel around to conferences. Western newspapers and Western university faculties make them welcome. The West—young and not so young—listens to them. Their influence in the West is incomparably greater than that of any previous Russian emigration.

Yet even if we look at a wider circle of individuals than those quoted here, we shall see that they all lived for decades in the capitals, and that several of them served in tricky situations on the ideological front—as Marxist philosophers, journalists, feature writers, lecturers, cinema directors or radio producers, even as Central Committee propagandists, Central Committee consultants, or—yes—in the public prosecutor's office, and to us down below, in the camps or the provinces, they looked (as they were) indistinguishable from the Tseka[18]-men and the Cheka-men, from the communist regime. They lived in harmony with it, they were not punished by it, they did not struggle with it. When I was getting ready, in the pervading hush of the Soviet '50s, to make my first breach in the wall of lies—*they*, and *their* lies, were what I had to break through, and I could expect no support from any of them. Then, suddenly, some of them were given a chance to move westwards, and move they did, discreetly dropping their Party cards by the wayside. Once over the

[18] Tseka—Central Committee. A name formed from the Russian initial letters, in the same manner as Cheka, the first name of the Soviet political police.

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Atlantic they became extraordinarily bold in their opinions on Soviet life. Here today, somewhere else tomorrow, they sped round loudly relating how terribly they, the pure and incorruptible, had suffered in the foul dens of Tseka propaganda, the public prosecutor's office, the Union of Writers, the Union of Journalists, though some of them had published up to a dozen books and any number of articles, and some could include in their *curricula vitae* films or plays produced in the USSR—and what was all that if not lies, lies and more lies? Nor has any one of them—not a single one—recanted, and publicly acknowledged that he was the same person who had lied to us and spat in our eyes, not one of them has told us anything about his own complicity, about how he spent at least part of his life reinforcing and extolling the communist regime, and receiving rewards from it. "The brutish masses are to blame for the regime, not I"—that is their philosophy. It does not enter their heads that real creative activity begins not with safe (or even risky) satirical exposure of others, but with searching one's own conscience, and with repentance.

The difference between our day and February 1917 is that before February there was no question of letting the cat out of the bag. The pluralists of the time held forth freely in 50 newspapers and from 50 platforms, and anyone could see in advance what they were up to (though, for lack of experience, hardly anyone understood, including many of the pluralists themselves. Whereas in the USSR today all sincere opinions, all genuine processes, thoughts, attitudes and wishes are kept hidden, on pain of official sanctions, under the iron crust of conformity. Only in the emigration can a man show his true face—and how frankly they do it! History has carried out a trial run, and it should be a warning to us.

THE greater a people is, the readier it is to laugh at itself. We Russians—Russian writers and Russians generally—have always ridiculed our country and abused it unmercifully, always considered everything in Russia worse than anywhere in the world—but we have always, like our greatest writers, done it because we love Russia, and suffer with her. Now we are being shown how it is done with hatred. From the tensions and the antipathies which we have examined here we can form an idea of many of those which are mounting up in the Soviet Union. Until now, people there have been compelled to keep their contempt for their bosses' political lectures to themselves, but if the Party bureaucracy collapsed tomorrow these "cultural forces" of ours would come to the top, and we should hear a chorus of thousands bawling not about the people's needs, not about the land, not about the decline in population, not about the responsibilities and obligations of each and all, but about rights, rights, rights . . . and all that it left of us would come crashing down in yet another *débâcle* like that of the February revolution.

I write this as the only hope left to me, I appeal to them, both those who have come out into the open and those who are still in hiding: gentlemen, comrades, come to your senses! Russia is not just a geographical region, a

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colourful background to your exercises in "self-expression." If you continue to express your thoughts in Russian, at least show the people that created that language some kindness, some sympathy, just a little love, make some little effort to understand it, and do not paint edifying pictures of your fellow-countrymen like that in *Sintaksis*, No. 3 (p. 73): "outside the beer-house, smearing snot over unshaven cheeks, and bellowing . . ."—I shall leave it to your intrepid avant-garde pens to supply the obscenity.

NOW I turn to some of the stuff written during these last six years against me personally. Not much of it is honest polemic: I come upon one sophism, one strained interpretation, one lie after another. Thus, one eminent *Kulturträger* ("culture is the religion of our time") has on two or three occasions in the Western press credited me with a desire to "restore the Byzantinism of the Third Rome" (where did they get that nonsense?), or to have a theocracy in Russia, or an "Orthodox ayatollah." This is not just the aberration of a single mind, or a single polemicist's far-fetched notion. It has gone the rounds, and they all repeat it: "Solzhenitsyn is in favour of theocracy." Where, though, and when did he say so? Search the 10 volumes of my published works as thoroughly as you like—you will not find anything of the sort. Nobody produces an actual quotation. Are they, then, knowingly lying? Of course they know, the whole lot of them, that they are lying—and they go on doing it!

I did, however, react to the "ayatollah" taunt, by way of exception: that was one stupid libel too many. I replied in a paragraph of 80 words (prepositions and conjunctions included). The answer came in 1300 words (the ratio shows how unsure of themselves they were) with no hint of an apology for defaming me, but with a new lie instead: I allegedly teach that "the criterion of national identity is ancestry, in other words, blood." But where did I "teach" that the "criterion of national identity is blood"? Where did that "in other words" come from? Don't expect an actual quotation. You won't get one. No such thing exists. It is just another garbling. The literary scholar in question should have read *Lenin in Zurich* a little more closely. Ancestry—yes, that means above all our spiritual heritage—and our ancestors made it what it is: national identity springs from this heritage, from intimate ties with the soil on which your nation was born, not with that on which you merely happen to grow up. There was no spiritual bond whatsoever between Lenin and Russia, at any period in his life. But in the United States, if a child grows up in a Polish, or nowadays we might equally well say a Vietnamese, family, he may become a model American citizen, he may never see the land of his forefathers, yet his heart will always beat quickest in response to the sufferings of his distant homeland. Why, otherwise, should Poles whose families have been in the United States for four generations react so vehemently, and with such anguish, to events in Poland rather than to what happens to Cambodia or Eritrea? No one

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insists that this is the "blood" speaking. It is ancestry, spiritual upbringing, national tradition. This is why after 200 years the United States has still not welded itself into a single nation, why it is still torn apart by powerful national lobbies.

Yet another trick is widely used by the pluralists: that of plucking a convenient quotation from someone else—V. Osipov, N. Osipov, Krasnov, Udodov, Skuratov, Shimanov, Antonov[19]—from authors whom I may never have clapped eyes on, with whom I have never corresponded, let alone collaborated in print—never mind, rip out a quotation and pin it on Solzhenitsyn: if he does not bark back, he will be stuck with it. If so-and-so wrote such-and-such, Solzhenitsyn must think likewise!

There are many pluralists, beginning with the proselyte Mihajlov, who do not disdain this crude trick. Thus, the journal[20] which apparently aspires to be the arbiter of our aesthetic tastes and our higher thinking in its very first number demolishes a certain Shimanov[21], who blocks the path of all free Russian thought. The author of this cautionary denunciation rummages for all he's worth through Shimanov's system—and we soon discover why: to collect and display what is "common" to Shimanov and Solzhenitsyn—that all non-Christian peoples are barbarians, and especially the Chinese, that the stronghold of secularized humanity is not as you might think Marxism, but the West, that the Russian people's mission is to save Christendom from the "yellow peril"; that both writers when they speak of the "educated rabble" mean "the elders of Zion," who of course must be removed as the main obstacle in the path of the Russian nation.

Shocking, these revelations about Solzhenitsyn! How much louder though the thunderclap would be if Solzhenitsyn could be quoted directly—on barbarian peoples, on the yellow peril and on the elders of Zion. But there are no such quotations to be had. So scrape whatever you can from Shimanov.

As the first gem to adorn his jewelled Codex of Good Taste Aesthete No. 1 picks up a cheap and specious fake from a bustling commercial traveller. Why didn't he reject it, back there where no one could see? This tawdry bit of glass might even clash with Favorsky's engravings.[22]

Look now—here are my works, ten volumes of them, and here are a dozen historical chapters. Criticize them! Pick them to pieces! Help yourselves! Here you'll find a complete programme to pull apart—that of Shipov (much more profound than anything yet proposed by our pluralists). Is the small print too small for you? Can't your eyes cope with it? But no! They argue with me as though I were a Party propagandist. They hurl themselves, trumpets blaring, on one particular paragraph in one particular interview.

[19] Real names or pseudonyms of right-wing *samizdat* writers.
[20] *Sintaksis*.
[21] A *samizdat* writer. In *Report from the Red House* he described his internment in a psychiatric prison hospital.
[22] An allusion to the many etchings by Favorsky which provide illustrations for *Sintaksis*.

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But when I write "we have no one to blame except ourselves"—two dozen critics contrive not to notice this sentence, or others like it, and instead they howl in chorus that "Solzhenitsyn blames the non-Russian peoples exclusively for the revolution." There is yet another neat trick: taking a genuine quotation, but tearing it from its context, deliberately misconstruing it, distorting its meaning. Several pluralist authors were quick to make use of this felonious ploy, among them, alas, the fastidious Pomerants, who wrenched a sentence out of my *Repentance*.[23] A sentence of the most general character, saying that when you repent it is difficult to stop remembering whether or not the fault was all on your side: say what you like, it makes a great difference, not of course when you go to confession in church, but in ordinary human existence. Who can escape this fact? I know that Christianity makes higher demands on the penitent, but that was not the subject of my article: it dealt with ordinary, everyday human feelings of remorse, which have their limits. Here is the passage: "if the person whom we wrong has at some time wronged us, our remorse is not so desperate, the fault on the other side casts a mitigating shadow. The Tartar yoke must always weaken any feelings of guilt we may have towards the remnants of the Golden Horde."[24] The thought here is a simple one: they, not we, were the first intruders. I had in mind the events of six centuries, including the conquest of Kazan and Astrakhan. But the passage has been wrenched out of context, quoted in isolation from the general argument of the article, and shamelessly interpreted—by one writer, by a second, by a third, by a fourth—to mean that I approve of the Soviet deportation of the Crimean Tartars!

I have not tried to trace the original from which others copied. I shall address myself only to one from whom I would never have expected it. Grigorii Solomonovich![25] You have appealed to us not to "foam at the mouth" even when we are exposing the horrors of the Gulag, writing of the millions destroyed by the communists. Why then, when you are speaking not to a politician but to a writer, who has never cut off anyone's head, do you permit yourself to foam at the mouth? Why do you not cry shame on your supporters and your pupils? To judge from your article, you have read *Gulag*, so you remember what I write there about the sufferings of the deported Crimean Tartars. You must know whether my sympathies are with them or with those who exiled them. You may also have read *Cancer Ward*, and may have remembered how tenderly I describe the dying Tartar Sibgatov, who will never now return to the Crimea? (One of the least "passable" parts of the book from the censor's point of view.)

And yet you can twist what I say in such a way. You, whose pupils call you "the gentle sage."

And all this on the calculation that I won't break my silence, that I am too busy with the "Knots" to let myself be distracted?

[23] "Repentance and Self-Limitation in the Life of Nations," one of the three essays by Solzhenitsyn in his collection *From Under the Rubble* (Collins Harvill, London, 1975).

[24] Ibid.

[25] Pomerants, mentioned above.

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It is not I, but your friends the pluralists, whose favourite insults are "Tartar" and "Tartar-messianic".

WHAT purpose is this dishonest discussion intended to serve? What use do they hope it will be in the construction of Russia's future? Why did our proud pluralist intellectuals feel the need to lie from the very first? Because their arguments will not hang together without lies? The most pedantic bookworms among them invent shamelessly, without ever quoting a single line. They no longer feel any need for caution.

What faith can we have in the consistency of the pluralists? Do the "rights of man" apply to everybody, or only to them? I, for instance, availed myself of the most modest of the rights of man—to decline a lunch invitation.[26] How this angered the pluralists: it was my duty to go! (It was the wish of the collective!) A certain Lyubarsky wrote an article breathless with indignation (once again, the proportions reflect their insecurity: the article was three times as long as my letter to the President). Then again, the main point in my letter they ignored or distorted, "failed to understand," while censoriously and at some length informing me which dissidents I had treated disrespectfully (leaving Sinyavsky out for some reason), although in my letter it was clearly stated that the guest-list had been carefully concealed from me, and Lyubarsky knows that it was not announced till afterwards. With typical Soviet sleight of hand he slips me in between Brezhnev and *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, and accuses me of irresponsibly repeating the "lunatic opinions" of "some general," taken from "some American newspaper." The paper was in fact the *Washington Post*, the major newspaper in the capital, and the general was General Taylor, head of the joint Chiefs of Staff, who got his strategic concept of selective destruction of the Russians by atomic strikes from academic circles, from Professor Guertner.

The free pluralists have never condemned communism so angrily. They have all joined in emptying their slop-pails on me in recent years—the whole servile, yapping Soviet press, in the space of 20 years, never bespattered me so copiously and ruthlessly. They were greatly helped by the fact that the Western press, especially in the States, is in the hands of leftists, so that it quickly and eagerly joined in and took over this persecution.

For so many years the Soviet educated rabble seethed impotently, whispering their caustic remarks about the regime in each other's ears. Who could have predicted that the writer who was the first to brave the cruel jaws of the regime and din home-truths into its ears would be hated more fiercely by them than by the regime itself?

"A falsifier of history . . . a reactionary Utopian . . . he has ceased to be a writer and become a politician . . . he enjoys defending Nicholas I (?) . . . *Lenin in Zurich* is a lampoon . . . *Lenin in Zurich* is a travesty . . . he has gone bankrupt . . . he sublimates his lack of learning in the form of

[26] An invitation to lunch with President Reagan, in the company of various other ex-Soviet non-conformists in 1982.

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prophetic omniscience . . . his enormous intellectual pretensions . . . shamanistic conjuring up of spirits . . . he doesn't give a brass farthing for Russia's conscience . . . moralism grounded in nihilism . . . he exploits his reputation to sanctify the most depraved ideas that lurk in Russian brains . . . an insatiable passion for political prophecy combined with infantilism . . . loss of artistic taste . . . a naive writer . . . his way of thinking is structurally very simple, and very like that of the overwhelming majority, which is why it is so generally accessible. . . ." (That is what enrages them. But my object is to be accessible.) . . . "A fanatic, who thinks by association rather than logically . . . he foams at the mouth, in a paroxysm of hate . . . a political extremist . . . a lone wolf . . . a petty man, vengeful and embittered . . . nurtured on flattery . . . pompous arrogance . . . a lone wolf who has run away from the pack . . . he has completely lost touch with reality . . . a somnambulist, living in a world of mummies . . . he lies easily . . . he tries to further the dissemination of his monarchist views by playing on the religious and patriotic feelings of the people [it could be verbatim from *Pravda*] . . . he has arrived at neo-Stalinism . . . his Stalinism is quite conscious . . . Lenin and Solzhenitsyn have an absolutely identical conception of freedom . . . in his opinion the communist system is unsuited to Russia only because it is un-Russian—and not because it is atheistic and murderous— . . . he has capitulated to totalitarianism . . . he is a frenzied supporter of clerical totalitarianism . . . Russia's ayatollah . . . the Grand Inquisitor . . . if Solzhenitsyn ever came to power his would be a more dangerous version of the present Soviet regime . . . his behaviour is programmed by political mummies who once supported Hitler [why not by Hitler in person?] . . . the danger of a rebirth of fascism . . . we find in his preaching and his pronouncements in the press amoralism, dishonesty, and anti-semitism worthy of the Nazis. . . ." And finally—"ideological founder of a new Gulag."

And all this was written not by deluded foreigners, but by my—in a manner of speaking—fellow-countrymen. The tone of the pluralists has become more and more exasperated, more and more outraged from year to year, so that, no longer satisfied with these accusations, bad as they may seem, they have resorted more and more to personal smears . . . "he is losing his reason . . . his mental decline has impaired his moral control . . . befallen by madness . . . the less its moral content, the more easily a head is cracked by the shock of fame. . . ."

They even demanded that I should be silent, and stop addressing the Western public. (As though I am not often silent. We don't even get round to refusing all the Western invitations we receive.) I have even been asked point blank why I had to survive the war, imprisonment, cancer. I have been declared utterly finished, and buried (as the cat was by the mice).

How often they have trotted out my own confessions[27] in their libellous

[27] An allusion in particular to the early chapters of *The Gulag Archipelago*, in which Solzhenitsyn regrets some of his own behaviour before and after his arrest.

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attacks—pretending that these were discoveries they had made for themselves. Round every penitent page my base opponents danced their victory jig—prancing, pointing the finger, exulting, as though I had tried to conceal something and they had exposed it. (And yet some of this set are writers. What do they think literature would be without confessions?)

Little by little, they pooled all their libels. Then they thought up another trick—a visual aid: a series of fanciful photographs of the "Solzhenitsyn family" was published—a parade of plug-uglies and dimwits, a contemptible clan, as people of Russian peasant stock inevitably are. As witty Max Geltman put it in *Midstream*: "all those in this writer's pedigree are such peasants that his pages seem to be soiled with cow-dung."

In the American left-wing journal *Dissent* a bright couple discovered a dangerous connection: "Solzhenitsyn's negative traits are traits of Russia, and . . . his liberal opponents' quarrel is not with him but with Russia itself . . . Solzhenitsyn's readers may like him or not like him, but this is the same as liking or not liking his country . . . the link with which has not been broken—rather it has been strengthened—by exile, just as [please admire the comparison] the parts of a crushed worm, writhing, strive to unite again."

They have adopted the term "Solzhenitsyn's people" which they use in print as though it were self-explanatory, as though terrifying cohorts, mobilized and trained by me, and operating secretly, really existed somewhere. Gentlemen, come to your senses! If I incessantly attended conferences, as you do, if I was forever organizing committees, if my occupation, like yours, was truckling to State Department officials . . . but I shut myself up for six years to work, and I never even pick up a telephone. All the commotion you create is the result of hatred and fear. Your concerted and concentrated hatred goes a long way towards convincing me that the path I have chosen is the right one, and good for Russia.

The natural rebirth of Russian minds and Russian strength, the sporadic signs that our nation is not completely dead—is it in your view some sort of conspiracy?

So we find to our surprise that in many of its characteristics, its tenets, its value judgments, its methods, the pluralism so dearly bought merges with old-fashioned revolutionary democracy, with "unspoiled" Bolshevism. They are alike in junking Russian history. In their hatred of Russia, and of Orthodox Christianity. In their contempt for the peasant. In their view that "communism is not to blame for anything." In their insistence that "we should not keep remembering the past." And also—as we now know—in their use of lies as building blocks in argument.

We thought you were new—but we find you're still you!

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Yesterday and Today in Alexander Solzhenitsyn's *The Red Wheel*

Michel Heller

ADDING the 1,200 pages of *October 1916* to the 1,000 pages of *August 1914* gives one an idea of the size of *The Red Wheel*, an enormous project by the author of *The Gulag Archipelago*. These first two "Knots" of "historical narrative within clearly defined periods," as the writer describes his genre, encapsulate the era which began with the ascendance of Nicholas II to the Russian throne in 1884 and which ended on 4 November 1916. Alexander Solzhenitsyn admits that it is impossible to interrupt the flow of history, or to select one moment when a change took place, "the moment of truth," as the toreadors call it, which determines the future.

The reader who becomes familiar with these two "Knots" of narrative witnesses the first rotations of *The Red Wheel*. He then understands a large part of the project, but not all of it. Such a huge book, with a multitude of characters, both real and fictitious, an abundance of facts, reflections and details, is open to various interpretations. Solzhenitsyn, who stands alone in Russian and in world literature, generally provokes exaggeratedly strong emotions among critics and commentators. It is standard practice either to run him down without giving quarter or else to praise him unrestrainedly. In 1931 Yevgenii Zamyatin wrote a letter to Stalin in which he explained his position: "Just as once upon a time the Christians invented the devil as a convenient personification of evil, so the critics have made me out to be the devil of Soviet literature." Not only the attitude of official Soviet critics but also that of a significant number of Western ones towards Solzhenitsyn is reminiscent of this ironical complaint by the author of *We*.

The hero of Jorge Luis Borges' story, "Pierre Menard, author of the *Quixote*," decides to write *Don Quixote*. He does not intend to imitate Cervantes' novel, nor to create another version of the story of the Knight of the Sorrowful Countenance, but to write the novel itself. Borges creates the image of the ideal reader: Pierre Menard not only learns seventeenth-century Spanish, but reads all the books which Cervantes would have known, researches into the habits and customs of Spain, and recreates the book in the author's tracks. All authors dream of having such a reader. The author of *The Red Wheel* undoubtedly deserves one. But as yet, it seems, he has not found one.

I read *The Red Wheel* in my capacity as a historian. The subject of the book is revealed by its title. As an epigraph Solzhenitsyn could have chosen the words spoken by the main character in Boris Pilnyak's story "The Tale of the Unextinguished Moon"; this character, "the First One," says: "The wheel of history is turned almost exclusively by death

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and by blood—especially the wheel of revolution." The speaker is an expert in these matters: in the figure of "the First One," Boris Pilnyak was portraying Stalin as he sent Naval Commissar Frunze to his death in 1926.

DEATH, blood and revolution—these are the contents of *The Red Wheel*. After the publication of *The Gulag Archipelago* the opinion, frequently expressed, was spread about reproachfully that Solzhenitsyn had produced nothing new, that he had already told the world everything there was to know about the Soviet camps. Such a reproach was unjust: everything had been told, but nobody really knew anything. His book opened people's eyes, and the word Gulag became the shortest, most precise definition of the Soviet system. The words of Hyppolite Taine were affirmed: in order to be a historian one must be a great writer.

The Red Wheel is a history of the Russian revolution. However, Solzhenitsyn has not written a historical novel; he tried that genre and came to the conclusion that it would not be suitable for the project which has been his obsession, as he himself avers, "since 1936." The first version of *August 1914*, published in Paris in 1971, is a marvellous example of a historical novel. But he radically altered the structure of the first version, and in 1983 published the second *August 1914*. On first publication the genre was not defined, but the second edition of *The Red Wheel* is dubbed "a narrative of clearly defined periods." In this way Solzhenitsyn is announcing the creation of a special genre, as when he called *The Gulag Archipelago* "an experiment in artistic investigative research."

The difficulty of writing a history of the Russian revolution is apparent if one recalls that when Michelet turned his attention to the "red wheel" France had already managed to survive the destruction of the monarchy, the Jacobin dictatorship, the Thermidor, the Consulate, the Empire, the restoration of the Bourbons, the Republic and the Empire again. Solzhenitsyn too turns to his subject 70 years after the events of the October revolution, which transformed Russia into the Soviet Union; however, it remains in the control of the party which organized the revolt. Today it is extraordinarily difficult to depict in the form of a novel the sources of the events of 1917 and everything that happened when the old world was supplanted and the construction of the new one began. As Boris Pasternak wrote in 1929: "I have come to the conclusion that even destruction can only be painted in its true colours when it has already been defeated by society, when a state of growth has been restored." Solzhenitsyn could not take *War and Peace* as a model, since Tolstoy represented a society which had experienced the catastrophe of war and had emerged victorious.

The Red Wheel belongs to a new genre, in which Solzhenitsyn tries to understand the reasons for a country's destruction. He combines historical research with the sort of probabilities that a novel would provide. *The Gulag Archipelago* was his first attempt at "artistic

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investigative research." As a contemporary of the events described, he recounts his own fate; upheld and affirmed by 227 witnesses, it is the history of the country's Gulags, as the "red wheel" of the Soviet state ceaselessly warps it out of shape. The writer was not a witness of the events recounted in the "Knots" of *The Red Wheel*. However, he is convinced that today's researcher not only understands but also perceives the events of the past better than would a contemporary. "The people of the time were in a self-induced state of hypnosis," says Solzhenitsyn.[1]

For the writer there can be no doubt that their descendants are 70 years wiser than the witnesses of the revolution. He has good cause to think so: the historical sources—documents, testimonies and memoirs—are endless. From the very day when he first thought of writing "a great novel about the revolution" Solzhenitsyn's entire life has been obsessed with his "project." In contrast to his creator, the hero of *The First Circle*, Gleb Nerzhin, is satisfied with his fate: "What better view of the Russian revolution is there than from behind the bars which it cemented into place?"[2] For him prison is an inevitable step on the road to understanding the revolution.

SOLZHENITSYN began writing a novel about the revolution as a young man. 35 years later he published his first "Knot." In spring 1976, as he relates in the conclusion of the second edition of *August 1914*, at the Hoover Institute in California he gathered "vast material on the history of the murder of Stolypin." One can imagine that at that time he discovered the insufficiency of the framework of the historical novel, and realized the impossibility of placing his "project" within such a framework. The new edition of *August 1914* was not purely an expansion of the old text; the "Knot" had become two volumes. A new genre was born, and the central axis of *The Red Wheel* was formed.

The key to an understanding of the reasons for and the nature of the changes made to *August 1914*, which determined the form and content of *October 1916*, and as one can imagine of all the subsequent "Knots," can be found in the novel *The First Circle*. In the conclusion of the final (the seventh!) edition, the author recounts the book's lengthy history, which began in 1955 and ended in the summer of 1968. The novel became famous throughout the world, as Solzhenitsyn explains, in a shortened version, which he had prepared with the chance of publication in the USSR in mind. As he puts it, the "true" version of *The First Circle* came out in 1978. The new (revised) version is distinct from the old (distorted) one by the fact that a passion for history, an obsession with remembrance of the past and discovery of it as the essential motive for the actions of the two central heroes are all expressed with remarkable emphasis.

While still a young man, Gleb Nerzhin had heard a "hollow-sounding tocsin" like Lantenac in Hugo's "'93." A hollow-sounding tocsin rings

[1] *October 1916*, (Paris, 1984), Vol. 2, p. 509.
[2] *The First Circle*, (Vermont-Paris, 1978), Vol. 1, p. 363.

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out, demanding that he "seek out and understand! Unearth and remind!"[3] As a boy he senses that he is being deceived, that he is being fed "historical lies." And his whole life—his youth, the war, prison—is taken up with searching for the truth about the past. Having discovered "people's astounding ability to forget," Gleb Nerzhin makes a choice: to find out the truth and to crucify the lies. "Let their lies hang and rot with four nails stuck through them, until the sun's light goes out for ever, until life on the planet Earth is frozen cold."[4] In this Gleb Nerzhin sees his mission, "his duty and his vocation." History prompts the novel's other hero, Innokentii Volodin, to make a choice also. The line of thought involved in the portrayal of Volodin underwent the most serious alterations. In the "distorted" version Innokentii is in fact innocent, as his name suggests: he calls the wife of Professor Dobroumov, who treated him in his childhood, and warns her that when the professor goes away on a trip to Paris he should on no account give any medical preparations to his French colleagues. Volodin has struggled for a long time before deciding to make this telephone call. Finally he makes his choice, in remembrance of his mother and his childhood. The call is overheard and deciphered, causing Volodin's arrest.

In the "true" version, Volodin is a Soviet diplomat who calls the American embassy and tells the air force attaché, who neither wishes to listen nor to understand that in a few days' time a Soviet agent in New York will receive important technological details about the manufacture of the atomic bomb. The themes of the highest duty, of loyalty to it and its betrayal, return to the novel. Innokentii Volodin betrays: he discloses a state secret to the representative of a foreign power. The fact that this man does not listen, and consequently that no measures will be taken, is irrelevant. Volodin had made his choice between loyalty to the Soviet government and duty to mankind. He throws himself into an abyss, as Solzhenitsyn writes, knowing that he will perish, "because he has realized how unbearable it is that they have nicked the bomb without any qualms, and in a year's time they'll begin to jolt it about."[5] Innokentii tries to save civilization, since he understands that "once the communists get the atom bomb, the planet is lost."[6]

Loyalty and betrayal are the main subjects for reflection and argument in the novel. Each of its heroes is presented with a dilemma: to betray himself and give in or to remain true to himself and almost certainly perish. But what exactly do loyalty and betrayal mean? "Who was Prince Kurbsky? A traitor. Who was Ivan the Terrible? Our own father."[7] There is a merciless argument about the central point; what exactly does one's fatherland represent? Solzhenitsyn gives a voice to an inflexible Marxist, Rubin, an agitator during the war who calls on the Germans to throw

[3] Ibid. Vol. 1, p. 285.
[4] Ibid. Vol. 2, p. 195.
[5] Ibid. Vol. 2, p. 268.
[6] Ibid. Vol. 2, p. 272.
[7] Ibid. Vol. 2, p. 273.

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down their weapons and come over to the Soviet side; speech is also granted to an intransigent enemy of the communist regime, Sologdin, who fully justifies the actions of a former prisoner, who after 10 years in jail goes over to the German side, turning his weapons against those who imprisoned him. For Rubin the choice is simple: "How can there be any comparison? Objectively, my German is pro-socialist, and your convict is anti-socialist!"[8] Sologdin's choice is equally simple—socialism is an evil, therefore it is essential to fight it. In the chapter in *The Gulag Archipelago* dedicated to the man who in spring 1945 was declared "a traitor to his fatherland," Solzhenitsyn expands his views on patriotism, loyalty and betrayal.

Of all the heroes of *The First Circle* Innokentii Volodin is the only one who makes his choice outside prison, but his choice takes him straight behind bars. Volodin's change of attitude towards the world in which he lives, although he lives very well, happens at the moment when the pre-revolutionary past is revealed to him through old newspapers, photographs and theatre posters. The successful Soviet diplomat is moved not by a longing for the Russia that is gone, but by the all-consuming sensation that he has been robbed and cheated of his remembrance and his past. On realizing that the monster which has devoured his memories is a threat to the whole world and to all humanity, he tries to speak out about the danger. He commits a heroic act, which is declared treacherous.

IN THE very short "years of Innokentii Volodin's education" an important place is occupied by a quotation from Herzen which he hears: where is the borderline of patriotism?Why should love for one's homeland extend to any government that it may have? Should one help it but destroy everyone beyond that?[9] Volodin makes his choice entirely freely: he chooses loyalty to people, to civilization.

Prison bars divide the world inhabited by the heroes of all Solzhenitsyn's books written before *The Red Wheel*. Even those of them who are not yet in prison or who are no longer (for the time being) in prison, they all live in the shadow of the camp watch tower. In this world good and evil are clearly apparent, black and white, light and dark are sharply outlined. In *The Red Wheel*, a story about the normal world, everything is confused, tangled and interwoven. Some hasty readers have accused the author of the first "Knot" of countless sins: of monarchism, anti-semitism, nationalism and so on. The Soviet critics deem him unpatriotic and a traitor to the Soviet regime.

Gleb Nerzhin's words are heartfelt—find out and understand! Unearth and remind!—they reveal the significance of Solzhenitsyn's narrative. The many-voiced chorus of inhabitants of the Russian empire at the beginning of the century resounds from the pages of the "Knots." The writer gives voices to representatives of the main political and intellectual

[8] Ibid. Vol. 2, p. 152.
[9] Ibid. Vol. 2, p. 83.

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currents of the time: monarchists and revolutionaries, anti-semites and Jews, soldiers and generals, *muzhiks* and Duma deputies all speak, argue and fight with one another and with the external enemy. Solzhenitsyn is primarily interested in the political history of the eve of the revolution, but his own political sympathies constantly give way to humanitarian ones. On the pages of *The Red Wheel* the monarchists speak convincingly of the distinctions of the monarchy as an institution and its indispensability for Russia, while alongside this Solzhenitsyn draws perhaps the most pitiless portrait of the monarch in all Russian literature; the writer's benevolence towards the martyr-Tsar gives emphasis to the pitilessness of his analysis of the character of a weak autocrat. There are no doubts in Solzhenitsyn's feelings towards the "devils" who were meeting in Zürich cafés, the chief among them being Lenin. At the same time, the author's undisguised sympathy is felt not only in his description of the human qualities but also of the actions of the leader of the Bolshevik movement within Russia, Alexander Shlyapnikov. He appeals to Solzhenitsyn. The demoniac Bogrov is a neighbour of the sweet Suzanna, who declares: "I am proud and happy that I am a Jew."

The Red Wheel is the product of the combined activity of historian and writer in one. Solzhenitsyn the writer uses the whole corpus of presently accessible historical sources, while Solzhenitsyn the historian widens the possibilities offered by the documents, through his strong personal feeling for them. When he wrote *The Lives of the Twelve Caesars* in the first century A.D., Suetonius experienced everything that had happened in Rome long before he was born as if it was his own personal suffering. Gibbon's remarkable *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, written in the eighteenth century, is devoid of any element of acute personal involvement on the part of the author in the fates of those who created and destroyed Rome.

An idiosyncracy of *The Red Wheel* is the author's personal presence at the events which he recounts. The historian's task is to seek out a document, submit it to analysis and then provide it with a commentary. Yurii Tynyanov, in working on historical novels, tried to "get behind the document," to understand its further connections. Solzhenitsyn gets inside the document, and becomes its contemporary. The historian-author of *The Red Wheel* has collected and mastered a huge amount of material, while the writer-author has endowed this material with a striking dramatic quality, by looking at it from the inside. The dry shorthand reports of the Duma council, recording a government conference, might awaken the interest of a narrow-minded specialist historian. But on the pages of *The Red Wheel* they breathe with life, they excite, provoke and amaze. Moreover all these feelings are inspired not only by the talkative, reasonable, stupid or clever ministers and Duma deputies—the author himself brings out these responses by speaking to us from the past—angry, ironical, aware of everything that was happening at that time. His first attempt at "being there" within a historical document was made in *The Gulag Archipelago* where the writer argues with the public

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prosecutor, Krylenko, turning him inside out and predicting his death. In *The Red Wheel* this is the most vital way of using historical sources. The writer argues with the orators in the Duma, by quoting from memoirs, and by providing them with the actions and speeches of historical personalities he establishes their guilt, catching them out on contradictions. Having studied in depth the richest epistolary and diary material, Solzhenitsyn has drawn dazzling portraits of the main protagonists in the tragedy: the Tsar, the Tsarina and Lenin. Like mosaics, these portraits are made up from the original texts of letters and diary entries. The writer's personal involvement is expressed in particular by the systematic use of irony as a tool for analysis of the historical documents. Solzhenitsyn uses irony as the most economical, concise and laconic way of revealing the significance of his source. The writer puts forward an objectivity worthy of the highest praise, and an impartiality that is hard to achieve: the portraits of all the main historical personalities are etched with sulphuric acid, irrespective of the author's personal feelings towards them. The irony employed in the portrayal of Lenin is hardly surprising. Even more mercilessly ironical is his depiction of the Emperor. It suffices for Solzhenitsyn to write:

> In fact, sometimes through sinful impatience one would wish to know God's will more accurately, through the mystical bonds which exist for the initiated. For this purpose one might employ the mediation of those mysterious people who commune with the world beyond . . . Just such an enchanting man, Monsieur Philippe, an occultist from Lyons and a doctor of medicine, appeared by chance at the Petersburg court . . .[10]

And the reason for the appearance at court of a succession of such charlatans, culminating in Rasputin, is clearly apparent.

The conflict between Nicholas II and Stolypin, represented by Solzhenitsyn as the clash which determined the fate of Russia, is remarkably concise, psychologically accurate (on the basis of documentation) and conclusively expressed in the Tsar's irritable answer to Stolypin in reply to the information that the 1905 revolution had been defeated: "I do not understand what revolution you are talking about. There would not be any disorder at all if someone more manly and energetic were in charge, such as Dumbadze, the town governor of Yalta."[11] Solzhenitsyn never directly evaluates the Empress' behaviour; he has merely assembled carefully a fine selection of quotations from her letters to her husband. Alexandra sincerely loved her country and her people; she suffers on witnessing the pointless bloodshed of war and begins to investigate thoroughly the activities of the army and the fleet. "You must wait for a more favourable moment," she insists in a letter to the Supreme Commander-in-Chief, "Do not blindly put on the pressure—everyone agrees about this, but no one has made up their mind

[10] *August 1914*, Vol. 2, pp. 378–379.
[11] Ibid. Vol. 2, p. 221.

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to tell you. Even at headquarters my resoluteness is needed, the idiots!"[12] One could not better illustrate the character of Alexandra Fyodorovna than this, nor present the state of affairs in the country during the last months of 1916 more accurately.

Solzhenitsyn sympathizes personally with Nicholas II; he stresses his virtues and vividly evokes the martyrdom of the royal couple. And the truth, as Konstantin Leontyev put it, is that "good people are often far worse than bad people. Personal integrity may be personally pleasing and may inspire respect, but there is nothing politically significant or organized about these uncertain virtues. Very good people sometimes cause terrible harm to the state."[13]

> Not allowing myself even a touch of invention, by gathering material and finding everything out as accurately as possible, by keeping as close as I could to the historians, and as far away as possible from the novelists . . .[14]

Thus Solzhenitsyn defines his methods in the first volume of his first "Knot." He mentions this in connection with a description of the battle in the Masurian woods, where the Russian Field Marshal's lack of talent was rivalled only by the stupidity of the Cavalry Commander. Solzhenitsyn remains true to his credo "as close as possible to the historians and as far as possible from the novelists," in every volume of *The Red Wheel*. Incidentally, it is possible that this explains why the chapters of historical survey, printed in close type as a warning for the lazy reader, are some of the most significant pages in historical literature, often far more exciting than the personal experiences of some of the characters.

WHEN in his youth Solzhenitsyn first thought of writing a novel about the revolution, he began to gather material. The archives and libraries of the USA revealed undreamt-of wealth to him. His efforts to collect *all* the material about the Russian revolution were inspired not only by the obsession—and conscientiousness—of a historian, but also by the feeling, inevitable for a Soviet citizen, of having been robbed, by the desire to find out what had been so thoroughly kept hidden from him. All historians are familiar with the sensation of being crushed by material which cannot possibly be included in its entirety in the work they are planning. The most difficult problem facing every historian is the selection of material. For Solzhenitsyn the word "Knots" is synonymous with this selection process. He arranges his work around painful points in Russia's history during the first two decades of this century. In the first place he is interested in political history, or rather the history of power—its loss and its seizure. When the first version of *August 1914* was published, some readers who were contemporaries of the events

[12] *October 1916*, Vol. 2, p. 417.
[13] Quoted by Nikolai Ustryalov in *Under the Banner of the Revolution*, Collected Essays, (Harbin, 1927), p. 236.
[14] *August 1914*, Vol. 2, p. 383.

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described pointed out inaccuracies in the details—of clothes, makes of car and so on. Solzhenitsyn tries to communicate details of the past era with scrupulous accuracy in *The Red Wheel*, but the main point of his narrative lies elsewhere. As Boris Pasternak put it so well: "History is not constituted by what we wore, but by the fact that we were sent out stark naked."[15] This is the theme of the "narrative of clearly defined periods."

The second edition of *August 1914* was not only an adaptation to be inserted into the first "Knot"; the character of the entire narrative was altered. It was then that *The Red Wheel* was born. The introduction of Stolypin gives the whole epic an ideal hero and point of reference. In the first edition of *August 1914* the central episode was the battle on the Masurian marshes, the destruction of the Second Army and the suicide of General Samsonov. By killing himself the regiment commander became a symbol for dying Russia. The appearance of Stolypin—in the second edition—decreases the drama of the first defeat of the Russian army and the death of Samsonov, since everything had already been predetermined by the murder of Stolypin in 1911.

The two shots which rang out in the Kiev theatre on 1 September 1911 fatally wounded Russia, Solzhenitsyn asserts. The first causal link which he presents—from the Tsar to Stolypin—brings about victory over the 1905 revolution and the radical transformation of Russia which began with Stolypin's agrarian reforms. Nicholas II, as the writer demonstrates, did not recognize the importance of Stolypin nor the significance of his reforms. Solzhenitsyn very subtly shows that not only the Tsar was guilty of a lack of understanding, but so was his minister. A staunch monarchist, the truest of the true, in telling his wife about his meetings with Nicholas, Stolypin always referred to him as "the little boy," (*malysh*); "I love the little one," he would say,[16] or else "the royal child."[17] There is no doubt that the monarch was aware of this tender condescension. Similar relations betwen the clever and highly experienced Bismarck and Kaiser Wilhelm II also led to a breach between the Emperor and his minister. However, this breach was confined to Bismarck's retirement from affairs of state. In the final moments before making the decision to enter into the war the Tsar is tortured by the absence of a "solid, clever, outstanding man, who would take upon himself the responsibility and the decision . . . Stolypin! He was just such a man. That is who is missing at this very moment, here and now—Stolypin!"[18] Nicholas II can hardly have thought like that; here the writer-author wades into the river of the past in order to express his despair and regret, to remember the reason for Russia's downfall. The emotion in his voice, whenever he turns to the past, is rarely characteristic of a historian, and is explained by the identification of the writer with his hero. In recounting the stormy Duma meeting at which Stolypin was attacked from all sides by the deputies who

[15] Boris Pasternak, *Spektorskii*, Verses and Poems, (Moscow, 1965), p. 336.
[16] *August 1914*, Vol. 2, p. 220.
[17] Ibid. Vol. 2, p. 244.
[18] Ibid. Vol. 2, p. 449.

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were hostile to him, Solzhenitsyn undergoes the whole experience with him: "From all sides came a stream of unrestrained abuse, and suddenly our confidence, which had never been shaken, began to totter. Blow upon blow they rained down upon us . . ."[19]

The murder of Stolypin breaks this causal link. The war engenders a new one—from Lenin to the Tsar. The first crushed a revolution, while the second brings victory to the revolution. In history, as Solzhenitsyn understands it, the motivating force is an active "chosen few."[20] The author distinguishes between the activeness of good and the activeness of evil. In 1905–6 the revolutionary activeness of evil was challenged by the force of good. After 1914 the monstrously intense activeness of evil—of Lenin—was opposed only by emptiness and impotence.

In the composition of *The Red Wheel* the second "Knot" occupies a special place: nothing happens in *October 1916* (except, of course, the continuing war). Solzhenitsyn has chosen a moment of external immobility, such as occurs in an hourglass; the grains of sand then start to flow all the more freely but imperceptibly. In October 1916, the hourglasses of Russian history began to count out the final minutes, while the "active few" were using up the sparse time left to them in idle chatter. Over and over again the vital question is discussed: what is loyalty? What does betrayal mean?

In the first two "Knots" of *The Red Wheel* all the characters are faced with a choice between loyalty and betrayal. Each of them makes his choice and thus defines his own position on this or that side of good and evil. The personalities in the "narrative within clearly defined periods" are torn by the necessity of choosing between their ideals and their duties, feelings and convictions, belief in utopia or in reality, thirst for profit and official obligations. Only one of them harmoniously combines serving his duties and his ideals—Stolypin. He perishes because he is betrayed by the very people who should have rescued him. Most significantly Stolypin is betrayed by the Tsar.[21] The writer expresses loyalty and betrayal with particular force in his account of the relationship between Nicholas II and Stolypin. Calling the author of agrarian reform a "great Russian,"[22] Solzhenitsyn describes how he was betrayed at the highest level.

> Not at the time, nor even later on did the Tsar come near the wounded man. He never approached him or even attempted to go to him, yet it was those bullets which had already murdered his dynasty.[23]

Just as a storm cloud brings rain, so does the revolutionary movement, on top of the war, bring betrayal, and hysterical fear is the reaction to such an atmosphere of betrayal. Provocateurs who are working for the

[19] Ibid. Vol. 2, p. 238.
[20] *October 1916*, Vol. 1, p. 332.
[21] *August 1914*, Vol. 2, p. 344.
[22] Ibid. Vol. 2, p. 310.
[23] Ibid. Vol. 2, p. 250.

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revolution as well as for the secret police; agents of the Okhrana, in the service of the Tsar but apparently on the side of the revolutionaries; pogroms against the Jews as a punishment for "treachery" which was invented to provide a justification for military failures; accusations of betrayal by the Minister of War, Sukhomlinov; the gallows for Colonel Myasoyed, an innocent man convicted of treason—this is the atmosphere in which the heroes of *The Red Wheel* are living. The central episode in the first "Knot"—the murder of Stolypin—is the result of betrayal; the concluding episode in the second "Knot" is Milyukov's speech to the Duma on 4 November 1916, on the subject of "stupidity or betrayal."

The invariability of subject-matter in *October 1916* is only superficial; at a deeper level the question of attitudes to the war and to the monarchy is being decided. Mark Aldanov, who witnessed the revolution and who wrote a large cycle of historical novels in which a search for the sources of the 1917 cataclysm starts in 1762, concisely and accurately depicted the state of affairs in Russia in 1916; a separate peace with Germany was politically expedient but psychologically impossible.[24] The main theme of the second "Knot" is this choice between necessity and impossibility in October 1916—a time of conspiracies. A large number of plots arose, offering various solutions. Colonel Vorotyntsev comes to Petrograd to acquaint the reader with the conspirators. The general impression is that Russia has lost the war and that a revolution is imminent. Solzhenitsyn rightly points out the "self-induced hypnotic state of the contemporaries," who had convinced themselves of a defeat which had not actually happened. The writer, who can in no way alter the past, faithfully recounts what actually did occur.

From left to right across the political range everyone is talking about the inevitability of a change on the throne. For the overwhelming majority of "conspirators" the necessity of a palace revolt is bound up with the need to continue the war and to avoid defeat. The monarchist Vorotyntsev comes to the conclusion that it is essential to enter into a separate peace with Germany as swiftly as possible. The liberals, Guchkov and the Kadets disagree with him. On his side are the monarchists—Colonel Nechvolodov and the historian Olda Andozerskaya—who are convinced that the monarch and his monarchy are inseparable. Without the monarchy there can be no Russia, assert Nechvolodov and Andozerskaya. With *this* monarch, objects Vorotyntsev, even victory is senseless, because in the course of the war "Russia will have changed, it will have become another Russia."[25]

Innokentii Volodin chose betrayal for the sake of a higher ideal, the salvation of mankind. Vorotyntsev is prepared to commit treason for Russia's salvation. Volodin makes his choice and perishes. Vorotyntsev's presence in Petrograd has only one result—his disloyalty to his wife. The

[24] M. A. Aldanov, *Night at Ulm*, (New York, 1953), p. 172.
[25] *October 1916*, Vol. 2, p. 25.

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only outcome of the violent "conspiratorial" activity of the politically conscious class in Russia was the murder of Rasputin, committed in December 1916. The Russian "conspirators" cannot decide upon action, or on the accomplishment of their plans, since they are hindered by feelings of duty, of faithfulness to the oath they have sworn to their allies. In 1918 Patriarch Tikhon was to condemn the signing of the Brest treaty above all because it meant breaking Russia's oath to the allies. Moral torments of this kind did not disturb those conspirators who had gathered around Lenin in Zürich. But even Lenin's "skittle club" passed time in idle chatter until the appearance of Parvus, who had worked out a detailed plan for the destruction of Russia, and had obtained money for this end from the Germans. Parvus and Lenin are the most shining examples of the "active few," acting in the name of evil. They had chosen long ago and irrevocably to incite revolution against Russia.

For or against Russia, loyalty to or betrayal of Russia—in the end this is what the choices facing all the characters in *The Red Wheel* boil down to. But for the personalities of Solzhenitsyn's "narrative," just as for the contemporaries of the events described, there was no single Russia common to all; each person had his own perception of it. For the Tsar, Russia was his inheritance, left him by his father. For the Tsarina it was the inheritance which must at all costs be handed on to her son, "the baby," as she called him. For the peasants it was the place where they were born, lived and died. For the liberals it was the people. Olda Andozerskaya, the historian, offers the fullest definition: Russia is the people, but "it is also the roof under which the people live. A common home for all the people, otherwise known as the Russian state."[26] Vorotyntsev, who is in love with Olda, does not agree with her idea of "the Russian state." He is not in favour of the empire, and would return the Poles and Finns their lands without qualms. His "home" consists of the legally Russian territories, the borders of which are not easy to determine. Of all the wars fought by Russia during the last century there is only one which Vorotyntsev considers justified—the Crimean War. It was essential to fight it, he says. His attitude is understandable in view of the fact that the war ended on Crimean soil. But one could object that the Crimean campaign began with the invasion of Russian troops into Moldavia and Wallachia in 1853, besides which the Crimea had only become Russian in 1783, in all 70 years before the outbreak of the war.

The idea of Russia as a "home" which does not want to extend its borders into foreign territory is undoubtedly dear to Solzhenitsyn, and is relevant to his attitude to many of the problems surrounding war, revolution, and in particular "the Jewish question." The degree of attention devoted to the Jews and the Jewish question in *The Red Wheel* is above all explained by the place which it occupied in Russian politics at that time. The war acutely intensified arguments concerning the Jews because hundreds of thousands of refugees from Western provinces filled

[26] Ibid. Vol. 1, p. 419.

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the towns of deepest Russia, where virtually no Jews had existed previously; increasingly wide-spread rumours about "treachery" were personified by Jewish refugees. Russia's allies made use of the Jewish problem to put pressure on the Tsar's government, to their own advantage. The opposition in the Duma demanded equality for the Jews, aiming through this demand to unify all forces hostile to the government.

If the well-known formula that a nation which oppresses others can never itself be free is valid, then Solzhenitsyn is entirely justified in pointing out that even after the 1905 revolution and the ratification of the constitution, the peasants, the overwhelming majority of the Russian population, did not have full civil rights. His attitude is clear: the Jewish problem was the result of imperial expansion. The Jews could live peacefully and happily in Russia as long as they chose it as their home, as for example had Arkhangorodsky and Suzanna. However this is also relevant to people of other nationalities. With the greatest sympathy the author describes the engineer Obodovsky:

> A man's life is laid ready and waiting for him in the place where he was born. By extraction Obodovsky was Polish, but he did not think of himself as a Pole as he had only ever lived in Russia.[27]

SOLZHENITSYN'S favourite heroes reflect upon and argue about history. In *The First Circle* Gleb Nerzhin and Innokentii Volodin are obsessed by it. In *The Red Wheel* history torments Sanya Lazhenitsyn and Colonel Vorotyntsev; Varsonofyev, the priest Father Severyan and Olda Andozerskaya propound their theories of history for the others. *The Red Wheel* is far from finished, and it is still early to make judgements of Solzhenitsyn's views on history. Everything that he has written so far supports the theory that, rejecting the Hegelian-Marxist concepts of "conformity" and progress, the writer perceives in history the actions of two forces: Plan and Chance. By its very nature God's purpose is a mystery. If asked, Solzhenitsyn would say that one day we will understand the plan behind the events of 1917. The mysterious part played by chance is more apparent. A multitude of examples of chance occurrences are presented by him—it was by chance that the Tsar read Stolypin's note in 1906 and appointed him to the government; quite by chance a world war began . . .

Solzhenitsyn firmly believes in the very best state system for Russia: it would suit the historical peculiarities of the country, the identity of its people, and its spaciousness. He sets out his ideas in *The First Circle* and in his articles in the collection *From Under the Rubble*, and in *The Red Wheel* his heroes expound these views as they sit in prison in 1950, reflecting on Russia's fate in 1916. The most concise exposition is provided by the engineer Gerasimovich in *The First Circle*: "A rightful inequality! An imbalance based on real talents, both natural and cultivated. An authoritarian state perhaps, or maybe rule by those who are spiritually

[27] Ibid. Vol. 1, p. 394.

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superior."[28] In *October 1916* Vorotyntsev speaks of this: "History is made by a select few."[29] In the second half of the century the writer would refer to these few as the "technical elite." Solzhenitsyn shows that Russia's tragedy lay in the absence of an elite. There were talented, understanding, capable people—such as Shipov and Krivosheyin. But they did not have enough of the essential qualities which Stolypin possessed, "the will to create history, to become a leader."[30] By a tragic chance, the revolution had Lenin on its side, who did want to "create history," and who was a leader.

Solzhenitsyn the writer broadens the possibilities for Solzhenitsyn the historian; a brilliant chapter (62) in *August 1914*, for example, would have gained the author the highest praise for his defence of a historical theory, if only it were not too well written. The combination of historian and writer in one has a reverse side as well: the writer is not obliged to give just his own version of events, but can present many different ones. And it is then that the reader starts to ask questions. For example, in the first "Knot" we read the story of Maria Spiridonova, the schoolgirl who killed the man who oppressed the peasants, was raped by Cossacks and exiled to hard labour.[31] From the second "Knot" the reader discovers that Maria Spiridonova the schoolgirl killed her lover and was condemned for it.[32] The author assigns these stories to various characters and does not worry about differences in their accounts. The historian is obliged not only to give different versions of events, but also to express his own evaluation of them.

Some of Solzhenitsyn's attitudes evoke questions: in expounding unorthodox views the historian must cite his sources, but the writer is not required to do so. This makes the arguments more complicated. For example, the author's evaluation of the interaction between Russia and her allies during the course of the war may raise objections. He returns to the conflict between loyalty and betrayal again. In 1911 Russia signed a treaty with France, promising to come out against the Germans as soon as they had mobilized. The Russian invasion of Eastern Prussia did actually help the French to halt the Germans at the Marne, and to gain a victory which played a decisive part in the course of the whole war. The defeat of the Russian Second Army on the Masurian marshes engendered a tendency to heap the blame on the allies. "They decided to attack on the fifteenth day, with the rearguard quite unprepared—everyone was in such a nervous hurry to save Paris."[33] And a few pages further on: "Let us start off on the fifteenth, although the rearguard is not yet ready. Our friends are in trouble, but we'll get right up to our necks in it for their sakes."[34] This version of events is questionable for several reasons.

[28] *The First Circle*, Vol. 2, p. 317.
[29] *October 1916*, Vol. 1, p. 332.
[30] Ibid. Vol. 1, p. 251.
[31] *The First Circle*, Vol. 2, pp. 82–83.
[32] *October 1916*, Vol. 1, p. 224.
[33] *August 1914*, Vol. 1, p. 89.
[34] Ibid. Vol. 1, p. 125.

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Firstly, one can hardly say that the Russian army was "totally unprepared." It was ready, with a significant numerical advantage in infantry, cavalry and artillery, but ready, according to one English historian, as Zhilinsky understood readiness.[35] But that is quite another matter. Secondly, the French defeat at the Marne undoubtedly doomed Russia to defeat. Possibly a swift end to the war, a peaceful conclusion, would have prevented the revolution, but in the summer of 1914 everyone dreamed only of victory. Finally, a treaty had been signed, and to break it at that time would have seemed senseless. Developing his views, Solzhenitsyn insists that even in 1915 the Russian army "came to the help of her allies." When to over-bitter complaints Vorotyntsev replies "more correctly" than Svechin, he is condescending: "The French also lost 100,000 at Verdun."[36] In fact the French lost about 400,000, and the Germans 600,000, which cannot have alleviated the position on the Russian front.

On the old argument about Azeff, Solzhenitsyn states categorically that all talk of Azeff being a provocateur is myth, that in fact he served the Okhrana faithfully. This was also Stolypin's opinion. But Solzhenitsyn has not brought forward enough evidence to explode the "Azeff myth." For example, he points out that "in practice the leaders and instigators of the Socialist Revolutionary Party were always present at the scene"[37] during terrorist activities, while Azeff was abroad at the time of the murders of Plehve and Sergei Alexandrovich. This is correct; but Azeff was two paces away from Boris Vnorovsky, when on 6 May 1906 he threw a bomb at the carriage of Dubasov, Governor General of Moscow.

The pages devoted to Bogrov are particularly interesting because they are marvellously written and because in themselves they provide an excellent example of Solzhenitsyn's way of using his sources. The records of the Bogrov affair, as is well-known, were destroyed in a fire at the secret service department in Kiev in February 1917. However, the minutes of the interrogation of Bogrov by the police in Kiev and in Petrograd were preserved. The evidence of people who knew Stolypin's murderer has also survived, including the recollections of Kurlov and Gerasimov. For the portrayal of Bogrov Solzhenitsyn used the memoirs of the anarchist I. Grossman-Roshchin. From these he took the murderer's "sharp-wittedness,"[38] which Stolypin divined in the face of the man running towards him to shoot him.[39] The character of Bogrov and the "mission" which he takes upon himself are revealed in his conversation with Yegor Lazaryev, an open member of the Socialist Revolutionary Party. Solzhenitsyn has made use of Lazaryev's recollections, approaching them not as a historian but as a writer. In them Bogrov explains to Lazaryev why he has chosen Stolypin as his target: "I

[35] Norman Stone, *The Eastern Front, 1914–17*, (London, 1975), pp. 48–49.
[36] *October 1916*, Vol. 2, p. 16.
[37] *August 1914*, Vol. 2, p. 214.
[38] I. Grossman-Roshchin, "Dmitri Bogrov, murderer of Stolypin," *Byloye*, 1924, No. 26.
[39] *August 1914*, Vol. 2, p. 248.

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consider him to be the most harmful person at present, the instigator of government reaction."[40] Solzhenitsyn adds to Bogrov's words: "If one can put it like this, he is too good for this country."[41] He told Lazaryev: "I am a Jew, and just you remember that right up until now we have been living under the sway of the leaders of the Black Hundreds."[42] In Solzhenitsyn's version Bogrov says to him: "Just because I am a Jew, I cannot bear it that we are still living, may I remind you, under the sway of the leaders of the Black Hundreds."[43]

Those who knew the revolutionary Bogrov explained his action—the murder of Stolypin—as the desire to compensate for the sin of serving in the Okhrana. In the history of the Russian revolutionary movement there were several comparable incidents. When Bogrov went to see Lazaryev he had already obtained the Socialist Revolutionary Party's consent to let him undertake, upon his own account, an act of terrorism which he had been preparing. Bogrov was even willing to kill someone else: "Let the Party indicate some other suitable person."[44] Solzhenitsyn insists that Bogrov wanted to kill Stolypin without fail. There is some foundation for this theory. The anarchist Piotr Lyatkovsky, imprisoned in the cell in which Bogrov was put before his execution, found out from the guard that when they took the murderer to the scaffold, he managed to say: "The happiest moment of my life came only when I knew that Stolypin was dead."[45] Lyatkovsky and other of Bogrov's companions in his revolutionary activities explain these words as an expression of satisfaction at a successful terrorist act, which wiped out the shame of treachery. To Solzhenitsyn the murder of Stolypin was the outcome of a clash between light and dark forces, where the Jew Bogrov, by rejecting Russia, embodied the dark forces. The historical evidence available is insufficient for such an assertion.

AS WRITER and historian simultaneously Solzhenitsyn reconstructs the past and creates his own artistic world, in a personal representation of the past. *The Red Wheel* is at once a work of literature, of historical research and of reflection on real burning issues. The actual truth about the past does not need proving. It is enough to give a small, colourful example of this: Solzhenitsyn rehabilitates Colonel Myasoyed, who was executed on the strength of a false accusation, and in particular he advances data concerning the report made by "that son-of-a-bitch" Lieutenant Kolakovsky,"[46] which served as the foundation for his trial and execution. Concurrent with the publication of *October 1916* in Paris was the appearance in Moscow of a book in which are mentioned the

[40] Yegor Lazaryev, "Dmitri Bogrov and the murder of Stolypin," *Volya Rossii*, 1926, Nos. 8–9, p. 43.
[41] *August 1914*, Vol. 2, p. 132.
[42] Yegor Lazaryev, op. cit. p. 47.
[43] *August 1914*, Vol. 2, p. 132.
[44] Yegor Lazaryev, op. cit. p. 47.
[45] Piotr Lyatkovsky, "A Word about Bogrov," *Katorga i ssylka*, 1926, No. 2, p. 44.
[46] *October 1916*, Vol. 2, p. 452.

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"courage, intelligence and distinction of the Russian army officer Yakov Kolakovsky . . ."[47]

The meaning of *The Red Wheel*, the essence of the epic, lies elsewhere. Solzhenitsyn demonstrates the necessity for a man to make a choice for himself, to decide freely how he wants to live and how his country, his home, is to live. Solzhenitsyn suggests a "middle way" between the Left and the Right. Stolypin's policy seems to him ideal, since it ran "along the knife's edge."[48] Only a free man can represent an elite, an "active few"; only an active few can influence history. When the "red wheel" moved forwards in Russia there was no "active few" at hand. What happened thereafter will be recounted in the subsequent "Knots." The "narrative" of the past is addressed to today and tomorrow; it is vital to understand what happened, and to realize that man has to make his own choices. Solzhenitsyn affirms that loyalty to oneself and to one's home are genuine values, as distinct from loyalty to the regime or to the government.

Translated by Antonia Lloyd-Jones

[47] Alexander Gorbovsky and Yulian Semyonov, *Bez Edinogo Vystrela. Iz istorii rossiyskoi voyennoi razvedki*, (Moscow, 1983), p. 362.
[48] *August 1914*, Vol. 2, p. 537.

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On Solzhenitsyn's Stalin

James F. Pontuso

READING Solzhenitsyn's massive indictment of the Soviet Union raises one question before all others: why? The question has been asked so many times in so many ways that it now seems trite. Why were millions of innocent people rounded up, forced to work themselves to death, shot, or sunk in barges? Can it all be explained by the "personality cult," a Soviet euphemism, one suspects, for calling Stalin a madman? Was it necessary, as others have argued, to prepare the Soviet Union for war? Was it, as the philosopher Maurice Mearleau-Ponty argued (but later retracted), the price paid for rapid industrialization?[1] In looking for the causes of the Soviet terror it is appropriate to begin with the most obvious target—Stalin.

It is ironic, Solzhenitsyn muses, that the man whose name was on the lips of half the population of the world as the Great Leader of Socialism should now be blamed for having led the Progressive Movement down the false path of tyranny. Yet this is exactly what has happened. The former Great Leader of Progressive Mankind is presently cast as the scapegoat on whose head Progressive Mankind places all the evils of their movement. At one time, of course, his adherents defended his every action. They gave a variety of explanations, some serious, some frivolous, for his clampdown.[2] Solzhenitsyn's appraisal of those explanations provides a fuller understanding of the roots of the Soviet terror.

First, it has been argued (by Mearleau-Ponty, for one) that because all the great powers stood against the socialist political system of the Soviet Union, it has to be more intolerant of divergent opinion than its enemies in the West. Continually faced with a threat to its political life, the regime had no option but to enforce strict discipline. In short, foreign policy considerations were the source of the great terror. Solzhenitsyn's analysis of the Stalinist era shows that this argument is patently absurd. A government does not make loyal subjects of its people, he argues, by terrorizing them. The opposite is likely to occur, and did during the Second World War. A great number of Soviet citizens (especially in the Ukraine) welcomed the German invaders as liberators. Many hapless Russians, unable to swallow the mindless propaganda fed to them by their own government, simply could not believe that the most advanced people in Europe had turned into barbarians. Not until the SS began to

[1] Maurice Mearleau-Ponty, *Humanism and Terror*, trans. John O'Neill (Beacon Press, Boston, 1969), pp. 1–24, 70.

[2] Alexander Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago II*, trans. Thomas P. Whitney (Harper and Row, New York, 1975), p. 330.

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spread its terror did most Russians decide that their own devil was better than a foreign one.[3]

A second thesis put forward in defence of Stalin holds that he was preparing the nation for war. The Great Friend of the Soldier's prescience led him to rid the nation of its soft elements, while putting the strong in key positions. Solzhenitsyn, who can lay a certain claim to being a military historian, argues that this idea cannot be supported. He shows that Stalin was totally unprepared for Hitler's attack and for the war that followed; Stalin was simply fooled by Hitler.[4] Solzhenitsyn claims that in order to show Hitler its peaceful aims, Stalin's government "did everything it could to lose the war: destroyed lines of fortification; dismantled tanks and artillery; removed effective generals; and forbade armies to resist."[5] He even accuses Stalin of treason. He explains:

> . . . Treason does not necessarily involve selling out for money. It can include ignorance and carelessness in preparations for war, confusion and cowardice at its very start, the meaningless sacrifice of armies and corps solely for the sake of saving one's own marshal's uniform. Indeed, what more bitter treason is there on the part of a Supreme Commander-in-Chief?[6]

A third account of the terror holds that Stalin's hand was forced by real differences within the Party's leadership and by the threat that elements hostile to socialism would seize upon any weakness to overthrow the government. In order to maintain stability, Stalin had to keep the warring factions in check. Hence, the terror was necessary to save the regime, and through it, socialism.

There is good cause for saying that the Soviet government could not have survived without the use of terror. Solzhenitsyn agrees, but he argues that there is little cause for believing that differences within the Party existed or that an organized opposition stood in the wings, ready to seize power. Even if one takes into account Kirov's murder and the Party purges that followed, the overwhelming majority of those arrested before

[3] Alexander Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago I*, trans. Thomas P. Whitney (Harper and Row, New York, 1975), pp. 237–276; Alexander Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago III*, trans. Harry Willetts (Harper and Row, New York, 1976), pp. 22–28. Of course, it is possible that Stalin believed he could terrorize people into becoming active participants in defence of socialism. Such a policy may be reduced to the idea that one should hurt one's friends so that they may hurt one's enemies. All governments do this to a certain extent; they compel people to serve in the army and forbid them to desert. Yet the Soviet rulers went far beyond this limited form of compulsion. A rational person could have expected that the policy of terror would make its victims resentful. It is not reasonable to assume that a citizen might look upon a foreign invader as a friend when his own government has become his worst enemy.

Solzhenitsyn's reasoning is not conclusive, however, as regards Stalin's motivation: Stalin might have believed that starving people to death, torturing them, and sending them to death camps would encourage a feeling of *esprit de corps*. Solzhenitsyn's argument does suggest that Stalin was a tyrant, turned mad by his own power. More importantly for Solzhenitsyn, Stalin, as all Soviet rulers, dedicated himself to a policy of terror as the result of his adherence to Marxist ideology. In any case, neither explanation of Stalin's behaviour is the result of the encirclement thesis.

[4] Alexander Solzhenitsyn, *The First Circle*, trans. Thomas P. Whitney (Harper and Row, New York, 1968), p. 122. Cf. Mikoyan.

[5] *Gulag I*, p. 240.

[6] *Ibid.* p. 253, note. Solzhenitsyn acknowledges that after the invasion and after most of European Russia had been conquered, Stalin recovered and pursued the war vigorously.

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1937 had little or nothing to do with politics. Most were ordinary people trying to cope with their daily lives. Casting them as a political opposition, hungry for power, overlooks the facts. History has been misrepresented, Solzhenitsyn maintains, because the Party members who lived through the ordeal were people of letters who could write of their suffering. They encouraged the myth that the terror included only Party members and that they alone bore the brunt of Stalin's excesses. A far greater number of ordinary people suffered, but fewer of them wrote about it. Solzhenitsyn points out that there were no real differences within the Party. Communist leaders, except for Trotsky, applauded everything Stalin did, right up to the time they were thrown into the meat grinder themselves. He writes:

> . . . the majority of those in power, up to the very moment of their own arrest, were pitiless in arresting others, obediently destroying their peers in accordance with those same instructions and handing over to retribution any friend or comrade-in-arms of yesterday. And all the big Bolsheviks, who now wear martyrs' halos, managed to be the executioners of other Bolsheviks (not even taking into account how all of them in the first place had been the executioners of non-communists).[7]

Undoubtedly there were differences of opinion on specific policies, the pace of industrialization for example, and there was the inevitable scramble for advancement and power. Yet, on important matters the Party was remarkably united. All agreed that industrialization had to advance and the position of the Party had to be unchallenged. There were no cries of indignation from loyal communists when other parties were eliminated, when civil liberties were ignored, and when the kulaks were exterminated.

To make his point Solzhenitsyn chronicles the attitude of Party members who found themselves citizens of the Gulag. Almost to a person they separated themselves from the other prisoners, whom they considered, in accordance with the propaganda, enemies of socialism. Generally, they displayed the same contempt and haughty indifference to the camp community as they had to the general population in freedom. They accepted without question the necessity for the Gulag; they only objected to their own mistaken arrest. Under conditions that might have shaken the faith of Abraham, they refused to become embittered towards their earthly saint, Stalin.[8] There were, perhaps, a few who showed

[7] Ibid. p. 129. See also Stephen Carter, *The Politics of Solzhenitsyn* (Holmes and Meier, New York, 1977), pp. 26, 31. "Solzhenitsyn makes the point that those who defend illegality, even if their reasoning is based on impeccable Marxist principles, cannot expect legal principles themselves . . . Justice and legality are indivisible, those who participate in injustice have no claim on justice themselves."

[8] *Gulag II*, pp. 322–352. Again one must raise the question whether Stalin believed there to be serious splits within the Party. Solzhenitsyn merely makes the point that there was no objective evidence of resistance to Stalin. Whatever opposition that might have existed was in Stalin's imagination. As we shall see, Solzhenitsyn's portrait of Stalin suggests a certain paranoia.

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independence of spirit, but not many.[9] The true cost of Party discipline was loss of an individual point of view. All their beliefs, everything they had worked for, rested on loyalty to the Party. Where else could they turn for guidance but to the Party, and the Party demanded that they grovel.[10]

The only true resistance to Stalin's rule, at least in the camps, came from the Trotskyites. They staged a long and difficult hunger strike to gain better conditions for political prisoners (especially themselves). Solzhenitsyn writes of them:

> They conducted a regular underground struggle in the late '20s deploying all their experience as former revolutionaries, except that the GPU arrayed against them was not as stupid as the tsarist Okhrana. I do not know whether they were prepared for the total annihilation which Stalin had allotted them, or whether they still thought that it would all end with jokes and reconciliation. In any case, they were heroic people.[11]

Despite their best efforts the Trotskyites failed to bring about better conditions in the Gulag. In truth they had little chance of succeeding against the formidable powers they confronted. If they did not jump every time the Great Leader raised his finger, the rest of the Party did, and in the end that is why they were beaten.[12] When communists were

[9] Solzhenitsyn's memoirs are not kind to communists imprisoned in the camps. Many of them broke immediately. They humbled themselves in front of their interrogator, admitted to crimes they had not committed and implicated friends and associates in their fictitious crimes. In the camps they became stool-pigeons and, in trusty jobs, they stole food from the rations of others. See *Gulag I*, pp. 129–132, 201; *Gulag II*, pp. 346, 351.

[10] Solzhenitsyn takes the same position as Arthur Koestler, in *Gulag I*, p. 409. See also *Gulag I*, pp. 405–409, 412, 418, 477.

[11] *Gulag II*, pp. 317–318.

[12] But where were all the great revolutionaries who so staunchly withstood the Tsar's jails? Many communists who served terms under the old regime were simply unprepared for the brutality of the new. Solzhenitsyn argues that no socialist had ever been tortured by the Tsar's agents nor were any threatened by the Tsar's prison guards, who had, in many ways, turned against the old regime themselves. For those engaged in hunger strikes or in some form of passive resistance, the sentence, if convicted, was an added three months. The same offence under communist rule brought immediate execution. In fact the number of people receiving the death penalty under tsarism was miniscule when compared to those shot after the revolution. Prisoners were allowed adequate food, liberally supplemented with packages from home. Hard labour was a pleasure outing compared to the Gulag. Prisoners could even write if they so desired. Lenin published two of his most important works while in prison and exile—he simply refused to do manual labour and was not punished for his refusal. Solzhenitsyn, who had no choice but to work as a bricklayer, had to memorize all he had created.

There can be little doubt, Solzhenitsyn claims, that conditions for prisoners under tsarism were far superior to those under the historically more advanced stage of communism. First, he explains, although Russia was not a democracy prior to 1917 its rulers were influenced by public opinion. For the most part people were allowed to speak and, to a lesser extent, to write freely. This had an enormous effect on what the government could do. Second, the tsars of Russia, autocrats though they were, did not understand their power to be unlimited. They were restrained by a moral code passed down to them by generations of fellow Christians. They simply could not do what Marxist ethics allowed. God knows they probably would have loved to shoot a few revolutionaries, but their moral compunction acted as a brake on their ruthlessness.

Solzhenitsyn tells the story of Tsar Alexander II who put himself in prison for a few hours to discover what those he had sentenced were experiencing. Three hours is not much, but can anyone suppose that Stalin (or Lenin for that matter) ever tried to feel such empathy for his fellow man, for his political enemies? See *Gulag I* pp. 6, 106, 116, 131–133, 145, 190 note, 191, 226, 242, 352, 409, 432–435, 440, 460, 462, 465–467, 500; *Gulag II*, pp. 203, 204, 222, 223, 317, 339 note; *Gulag III*, pp. 36, 62, 77, 80–82, 110, 329, 384, 397, 514, 635; *Oak*, pp. 1, 2; *Zurich*, p. 73.

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released from prison and rehabilitated they did not protest at the brutal treatment their fellow countrymen were receiving, nor did they object to the insane policies which had led so many to be imprisoned. They went back to their old jobs and carried them out with the same ruthless vigour as before, all the while extolling the virtues of the Best Friend of the Prison Guards.[13]

A fourth formulation given to explain the Stalinist era maintains that it was a throw-back to earlier times. Russian culture and history, so the argument goes, have conspired to give Russians a defective character, one which allows them to become easy fodder for tyrants. Such prestigious scholars as Richard Pipes[14] and Robert C. Tucker[15] have concluded that Stalinism was a betrayal of Marxism–Leninism and a reversion to tsarism. Partly in response to the thesis of Pipes and Tucker (and partly in response to other American scholars and statesmen such as George Kennan, Averell Harriman, and Henry Kissinger) Solzhenitsyn set down his thoughts in an essay first published in *Foreign Affairs*, entitled "How Misconceptions About Russia Are a Threat to America."[16] There he states that the comparison between Stalin and even the worst tsars is foolish. "What model," he asks Tucker, "could Stalin have seen in the former, tsarist Russia. . . .?"

> . . . camps there were none; the very concept was unknown. Long-stay prisons were very few in number, and hence political prisoners—with the exception of terrorist extremists, but including all the Bolsheviks—were sent off to exile, where they were well fed and cared for at the expense of the state, where no one forced them to work, and whence any who so wished could flee abroad without difficulty. But even if we consider the number of non-political prisoners at forced labour in those days, we find that it amounted to less than one ten-thousandth of the population of Gulag. All criminal investigations were conducted in strict compliance with established law, all trials were open and defendants were legally represented. The total number of secret police operatives in the whole country was less than that presently available to the KGB of the Ryazan district alone; secret police departments were located only in the three major cities and even there surveillance was weak, and anyone leaving the city limits immediately escaped observation. In the army there was no secret intelligence or surveillance

[13] Stalin's names abound. Besides Pakham (incorrectly translated as Ploughman in the *First Circle*) Solzhenitsyn gives Stalin many titles, but not as many as he was actually given during his life: Leader of Nations, Father of Western and Eastern People, Father of Peoples, Best Friend of the Communication Workers, Greatest Genius of Geniuses, Great Generalissimo, Most Brilliant Strategist of All Times and Peoples, Best Friend of Counter-intelligence Operatives, Coryphaeus of Sciences, Greatest of All the Great, Wisest of All Wise, Leader, Great Coryphaeus, Best Friend of the Sailors, Omnipotent, Little Father, Immortal, Greatest Man on Earth, Wise Father, Father of the Peoples, One and Only and Infallible, Most Humane Statesman. Solzhenitsyn wants his readers to recall just how far the idolization of Stalin had gone. See *First Circle*.

[14] *Russia Under the Old Regime* (Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1974).

[15] *New York Times*, 21 Dec. 1979.

[16] Vol. 58, No. 4 (Spring 1980). Reprinted as *The Mortal Danger*, trans. Michael Nicholson and Alexis Klimoff, (Harper and Row, New York, 1980).

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> whatsoever (a fact which greatly facilitated the February Revolution), since Nicholas II considered any activity of this type an insult to his army. To this we may add the absence of special border troops and fortified frontiers, and the complete freedom to emigrate.[17]

Much of what historians now think about Russia before 1914, Solzhenitsyn claims, has been influenced by Soviet misinformation. In truth Old Russia could boast:

> . . . of a flourishing manufacturing industry, rapid growth, and a flexible, decentralized economy; its inhabitants were not constrained in their choice of economic activities, distinct progress was being made in the field of workers' legislation, and the material well-being of peasants was at a level that has never been reached under the Soviet regime. Newspapers were free from preliminary political censorship (even during the war), there was complete cultural freedom, the intelligentsia was not restricted in its activity, religious and philosophical views of every shade were tolerated, and institutions of higher education enjoyed inviolable autonomy. Russia, with her many nationalities, knew no deportations of entire peoples and no armed separatist movements.[18]

The view of Russia as a backward and evil regime, he continues, was carried to the West by *émigrés* who were themselves Russian revolutionaries and who had a vested interest in undermining support for the Tsar. Their aim was to convince the West, which was in the midst of its own social revolution, that the regime was covered with blood. They were certainly successful, comments Solzhenitsyn, for the outrage they produced against the Tsar has not been matched by a similar indignation against the deeds of the communist regime.[19]

No, Stalin was not a throw-back to the old Russia. He was no modern-day tsar whose Russian nationalism[20] so blinded him that he instinctively oppressed his own people. That idea, claims Solzhenitsyn, was created by the European Left as a means of salvaging something of their socialist ideals once the truth about Stalin became known. Stalin had little connection with the past or with Russian nationalism (except during the Second World War when only the peoples' love of Russia, not the Soviet Union, stood between him and military defeat). Solzhenitsyn writes:

> . . . only by some evil figment of the imagination could Stalin be called a "Russian nationalist"—this of the man who exterminated 15 million of the best Russian peasants, who broke the back of the Russian peasantry, and thereby of Russia herself, and who sacrificed the lives of more than 30 million people in the Second World War,

[17] Ibid. pp. 14–15.
[18] Ibid. pp. 15–16.
[19] Ibid. p. 16.
[20] He was Georgian.

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which he waged without regard for less profligate means of warfare, without grudging the lives of the people.[21]

ONE view of Stalin which Solzhenitsyn does accept is that, at least in part, the Georgian was a tyrant in the traditional sense of the term, that is, a man who ruled in his own interest. He admits that his description of Stalin derives from speculation rather than personal knowledge.[22] Yet, as one commentator has written, "there is probably no portrait of the dictator which is especially superior to this one."[23] In his novel, *The First Circle*, Solzhenitsyn uses the device of an internal dialogue to present the ruler's ideas and motivations. The reader is given to believe that he is privy to Stalin's innermost thoughts and feelings.[24] Allaback objects that "such a method rarely works with historical personages." It is as if "Stalin is squatting in Solzhenitsyn's hand."[25] Yet it is testament to Solzhenitsyn's artistry that the method does seem to work; it is a thoughtful examination of why tyrants act as they do. However, the reader should be warned that Solzhenitsyn's depiction of Stalin is fictitious. The importance of the portrayal rests more on the attempt to understand the motivations of a dictator than it does on the historical accuracy of the facts.

Stalin is presented as a man who has entered public life not exclusively for altruistic reasons. He has used his position to satisfy his desire for good wine, good food (his greatest pleasure), and female companionship.[26] At least, he once loved these things before old age overtook him and nature denied him their pleasures. Along with a physical decline, boredom has crept into his life; a deep boredom known only to those who can have their every wish immediately fulfilled.[27] Stalin

[21] *Mortal*, p. 14. Solzhenitsyn's own connection with Russian nationalism has been an important topic of conversation amongst his critics. Some suggest that he is a Slavophile. See the essays of Richard Pipes and Ronald Berman in *Solzhenitsyn at Harvard* (Ethics and Public Policy Center, Washington, D.C., 1980). They seem to argue that Solzhenitsyn's defence of the old regime is, in reality, a call for a return to tsarism, or rather, to a Russian theocracy. In other words, Solzhenitsyn has no standard of judgment other than that supplied him by Russian tradition.

One could remark that love of one's country—its people and culture—has not always been perceived as an ignoble sentiment. Be that as it may, Solzhenitsyn never once calls for a return to the old regime nor for the founding of a theocracy. He merely compares the tsarist government to the one that came after it. If the facts prove life to have been superior before the revolution that does not make Solzhenitsyn a Slavophile. Indeed, he is well acquainted with the defects of autocracy. See Alexander Solzhenitsyn, *August 1914*, trans. Michael Glenny (Bantam Books, New York, 1974); *Gulag III*, p. 15. At one point he even says that the old Russia experienced "Asiatic Slavery," *Gulag II*, pp. 152, 154. Yet he is still able to judge one government superior, the other inferior; one generally good, the other mostly bad. The ability to make such decisions is not rooted in an attachment to Mother Russia, but rather rests on the human capacity to make rational valuations based on a careful examination of the empirical evidence.

[22] Alexander Solzhenitsyn, *The Oak and the Calf*, trans. Harry Willetts (Harper and Row, New York, 1979), p. 78. In order to distinguish Solzhenitsyn's fictional account from the facts of Stalin's rule as Solzhenitsyn represents them, the present tense is used in this section.

[23] Stephan Allaback, *Alexander Solzhenitsyn* (Taplinger Publishing Co., New York, 1978), p. 86.

[24] Andrej Kodjak, *Alexander Solzhenitsyn* (G. K. Hall and Co., Boston, 1978), p. 8.

[25] Allaback, p. 86.

[26] *First Circle*, pp. 100, 122.

[27] Ibid. p. 102. On his birthday, "the works of thousands upon thousands of master craftsmen, the finest gifts of the earth stood, lay, and hung before him. But there, too, he felt that same indifference, that same fading interest. He quickly became bored."

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trusts only those subordinates who, like him, are self-seeking. He does "not understand the motives . . . of people committed to staying poor, like Bukharin."[28] He even allows Soviet soldiers to plunder Germany at the close of the war; a decision based on "what he himself would have felt had he been a soldier."[29]

Whether Stalin's physical appetites ever actually waned one can only surmise. Yet Solzhenitsyn's portrayal is meant to convey a subtle warning to all the pleasure seekers of this world. He reminds them, as Epicurus (whose ideas, not coincidentally, are featured prominently in the *First Circle*) once did, that physical delights are fleeting and that even people who have the opportunity to satisfy their every desire may find enjoyment slipping through their grasp. If Stalin has lost the desires of the body, his love of praise has certainly not diminished. He enjoys the fact that his name has:

> . . . filled the world's newspapers, was uttered by thousands of announcers in hundreds of languages, cried out by speakers at the beginning and the end of speeches, sung by the tender young voices of Pioneers, and proclaimed by bishops.[30]

But what is the meaning of the "personality cult"? Solzhenitsyn suggests that as most people of great political ambition, Stalin wants to be remembered for his deeds. He hopes that his biography, which he is comforted to know is selling in the millions, will perpetuate his achievements.

> The elemental, honest words of this book acted on the human heart with serene inevitability. His strategic genius. His wise foresight. His powerful will. His iron will. From 1918 on he had for all practical purposes become Lenin's deputy. (Yes, yes, that was the way it had been.) The Commander of the Revolution found at the front a rout, confusion; Stalin's instructions were the basis for Frunze's plan of operations. (True, true.) It was our great good fortune that in the difficult days of the Great War of the Fatherland we were led by a wise and experienced leader—the Great Stalin. (Indeed, the people were fortunate.) All know the crushing might of Stalin's logic, the crystal clarity of his mind. (Without false modesty, it was all true.) His love for the people. His sensitivity to others. His surprising modesty. (Modesty—yes, that was very true).[31]

He is also proud of his literary achievement since he knows "his every word straightway belonged to history."[32]

True, the Greatest of Greats had attained many honours in his life but he wonders whether he should not aspire to one more. After all, "there was nothing bad about the word 'emperor.' It simply meant

[28] Ibid. p. 121.
[29] Ibid. p. 118.
[30] Ibid. p. 99.
[31] Ibid. p. 100.
[32] Ibid. p. 120.

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'commander,' 'chief'."[33] However, there is a price he must pay for his great achievements; he is set apart from the ordinary people. Once his level is attained, who is left an equal? He worries that

> . . . there was no one to ask advice from; he alone on earth was a true philosopher. If only someone like Kant were still alive, or Spinoza, even though he was bourgeois . . . Should he phone Beria? But Beria didn't understand anything at all.[34]

The problem confronting Stalin in his quest for respect, love and even glorification, Solzhenitsyn shows us, is that he does not come by praise honestly. Indeed he terrorizes people in order to obtain it. His desire for honour derives not from the noble sentiment of magnanimity,[35] but from the stronger passion of envy; a fact over which Abakumov muses before entering the Chief's office:

> But he knew his Boss. One must never work full force for Stalin, never go all out. He did not tolerate the flat failure to carry out his orders, but he hated thoroughly successful performance because he saw in it a diminution of his own uniqueness. No one but himself must be able to do anything flawlessly.
>
> So even when he seemed to be straining in harness, Abakumov was pulling at half-strength—and so was everyone else.
>
> Just as King Midas turned everything to gold, Stalin turned everything to mediocrity.[36]

Stalin is especially mindful of all the bearded men who had laughed at him in the hectic year of 1917. None of them would ever laugh at him again. They could no longer say anything to diminish his glory. Even the Founder's work had to reflect this. It had been changed, twice.[37]

Solzhenitsyn's ironic account of the cult of personality makes the serious point that Stalin is caught in his own trap. His insecurities force him to seek the praise of others. Yet those same anxieties make him fearful of what people would say if they were free to speak their minds. He demands that others tell him what he wants to hear, yet there remains in his mind a nagging doubt; all the cheers ring hollow.[38] Perhaps even the dim recognition has arisen that the respect he so deeply desires can only be given by free people, but is easily mouthed by slaves. Underneath the bizarre histrionics which all but deified Stalin during his reign, Solzhenitsyn perceives a man trying to gain in quantity what he could never achieve in quality.

Solzhenitsyn's Stalin exhibits an even more dangerous passion, a not wholly ignoble one. In fact, it is the very motivation which Socrates seems to have dissuaded Glaucon and Adeimantus from pursuing in the

[33] Ibid. p. 130.
[34] Ibid. p. 112.
[35] Aristotle, *Ethics*, Chapter II, Book III.
[36] *First Circle*. p. 123.
[37] Ibid. pp. 104, 106.
[38] Ibid. p. 102.

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Republic. As in the case of many ambitious people, Stalin wants the world to dance to his inner tune, and not simply because he loves to wield power. The world, after all, is a very untidy place. People seem to disagree with each other on virtually everything. They are always arguing at cross purposes. Often their squabbles become violent and cruel. Stalin's experience has taught him that "the people themselves swarmed with shortcomings."[39] He wants to cure humanity of its maladies; a feat he can accomplish only by making people follow a single lead. In this endeavour Stalin can legitimately claim that he has been more successful than any other person in history.

> There had been many other remarkable edicts. However, he still found one weak spot in the whole architectonic system, and gradually an important new edict was ripening in his mind. He had everything nailed down for good, all motion stopped, all outlets plugged, all 200 million knew their place—only the collective farm youths were escaping.[40]

Of course, he has even greater plans in mind. "How would that sound, Emperor of the Planet? Emperor of the Earth!" Even for the Greatest of the Greats, however, things never worked out quite correctly. There "were always people who interfered" (for example, Tito, who "was apparently a British spy"[41]). "When one had been removed, someone else always turned up to take his place."[42]

What makes Stalin's grandiose designs particularly virulent is the addition of ideology. Tyrants of old believed that they could bring their countries to heel, but they never had so many zealous followers who believed it with them. True, they were intoxicated by their own self-importance, but in reality they stood alone. They did not have a philosophy of History that made their every act infallible. Marxist ideology compounds the natural megalomania of tyrants because it justifies all they do. Solzhenitsyn's glimpse into Stalin's life presents two other traits usually associated with tyrannical rule: cruelty and cunning.

In an exchange between Stalin and Abakumov in the *First Circle* the reader learns that:

> Stalin was terrifying because one mistake in his presence could be that one mistake in life which set off an explosion, irreversible in effect. Stalin was terrifying because he did not listen to excuses, made no accusations; his yellow tiger eyes simply brightened balefully, his lower lids closed up a bit—and there, inside him, sentence had been passed, and the condemned man didn't know it: he left in peace, was arrested that night, and shot by morning.
>
> The silence and that squint of the lower lids were worst of all. If Stalin threw something heavy or sharp at you, if he stamped on your foot, spat on you, or blew a burning coal from his pipe in your face,

[39] Ibid. p. 103.
[40] Ibid. p. 109.
[41] Ibid. p. 107.
[42] Ibid. p. 104.

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> that anger was not the ultimate anger, that anger passed. If Stalin was crude and cursed, even using the worst profanity, Abakumov rejoiced: it meant that the Boss still hoped to straighten him out and go on working with him.[43]

Furthermore, Stalin's cruelty has spread downward, engulfing the entire society. It has become the accepted means of command. Just as one real Stalin rules the nation, so, many "little Stalins" rule its parts.[44] A tyrant is not in power long if he lacks cunning. Stalin has shrewdly destroyed all those who might have challenged his rule. They were "choked, shot, ground into manure in the camps, poisoned, burned, killed in automobile accidents or by their own hand."[45]

Solzhenitsyn reports as a fact in the *Gulag Archipelago* that a key attribute of Stalin's rule was his ability to manipulate people.

> Therein lay his dark and special talent, his main psychological bent and his life's achievement: to see people's weaknesses on the lowest plane of being.[46]

He manoeuvred the members of the Politburo into signing the death warrants of their fallen colleagues. They all knew they were sending innocent people to their death, but fearing reprisals they went along with it. One by one their own turns came, but they had no grounds for defence. What could they plead, innocence? Those who defend lawlessness, after all, should not be surprised when that lawlessness overwhelms them.[47] Solzhenitsyn's Stalin seems to have learned the lesson taught by Machiavelli. He knows the "ancient key to popularity: first to encourage the executioners and then, in good time, to repudiate their immoderate zeal. He had done this many times and always successfully."[48]

No picture of a tyrant would be complete without examining the driving force of his life: fear. Stalin's fear borders on paranoia. It had all begun in 1937, at "the twentieth anniversary of the revolution, when there was so much reinterpretation of history."

> He had decided to look over the museum exhibits to be sure they hadn't got something wrong. In one of the halls—the same one in which the enormous TV set now stood—he had seen as he entered two large portraits high on the opposite wall. The faces of Zhelyabov and Perovskaya were open, fearless, and they cried out to all who entered: "Kill the tyrant!"—Stalin, struck by their twin stares as by two shots, drew back, wheezed, coughed. His finger shook, pointing at the portraits. They were removed immediately. At the same time, the first relics of the revolution—the fragments of Alexander II's carriage—were removed from the Kshensinskaya Palace.
>
> From that very day, Stalin had ordered shelters and apartments to

[43] Ibid. p. 117.
[44] *Gulag III*, p. 431.
[45] *First Circle*, p. 113.
[46] *Gulag I*, p. 412.
[47] *Gulag II*, p. 332; Carter, pp. 26, 31.
[48] *First Circle*, p. 129.

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> be built for him in various places. He lost his taste for dense city surroundings, and settled in this house in the suburbs, this low-ceilinged night office near the duty room of his personal guard.
>
> And the more people's lives he took, the more he was oppressed by constant terror for his own.[49]

Only the uncovering of plots by the secret police can quell Stalin's fears. No effort is spared in unearthing "terrorism" aimed at "his priceless person." But what if no conspiracies exist? The secret police must still show its vigilance; and thus it fabricates intrigues. The dissatisfied must be put under arrest, the unhappy kept under control. But since the knowledge of so much unrest strikes greater fear into the tyrant's heart, malcontents must be thwarted before their plans "reach the stage of actual preparation." Abakumov reassures his chief, "We catch them at the moment of inception, of intention . . ."[50] In the deadly game Abakumov plays with the Boss he must convince the ageing despot that his apprehension is not merely cowardice (yes, conspiracies do exist), without frightening him completely (we work tirelessly to expose them). No head of state security can ever accomplish such a feat.

Solzhenitsyn's scathing attack on Stalin's tyrannical life concludes with a not so subtle warning to future tyrants. Their lives could become as miserable as Stalin's just before his death.

> Growing old like a dog. An old age without friends. An old age without love. An old age without faith. An old age without desire.[51]

SOLZHENITSYN accepts the fact that Stalin's peculiar personality played a part in the terror, but he rejects the idea that the "personality cult" was the sole, or even the most important, reason Stalin acted as he did. After all, Stalin had reasons for the massive upheaval of society which he orchestrated. The one most often cited is that Russia's suffering was necessary to bring about rapid industrialization. Adherents of this doctrine argue as follows. Before the revolution Russia was a backward, rural, almost feudal society. The people, primitive in their folkways, were ill-prepared to adopt the advances of an industrial age. In order to modernize such a country the fabric of society had to be ripped apart and built anew. Not only did the economy have to be overhauled, but the psychological make-up of the people had to be transformed. Peasants, the vast majority of the population, needed to learn the mores of the technological age.

No doubt, proponents of this view agree, such a massive change brings about hardship. Yet measured against the suffering of, say, the English peasants of the seventeenth century, who were forced off their land and into factories by free market capitalism, the Russian peasants fared no worse. The real difference had only to do with time. What took a century

[49] Ibid. pp. 124–125.
[50] Ibid. p. 126.
[51] Ibid. p. 134.

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in Great Britain was accomplished during the First Five-Year Plan in the Soviet Union. In any case, the argument concludes, the society, peasants included, would be better off after the transformation occurred, materially and otherwise. Solzhenitsyn argues that the goal of industrialization motivated Stalin to act, but he shows the human cost of that action. First, of course, was the destruction of the kulaks. Party propaganda explained that they were rich, fat peasants who had more land than they could use and who exploited others into cultivating it. They were "blood-suckers" on the socialist community and it was the duty of the Great Leader to eliminate them.[52]

But there is another way of looking at these people, Solzhenitsyn suggests. It is not impossible to see them as industrious, skilled farmers, who, when given the opportunity to improve themselves, did just that. If some gained a measure of success greater than the others, that did not necessarily make them mercenary, it simply meant they were good at what they did. Once again, the practical effect of Marxist equality was to punish the virtue of hard work and reward the unproductive and unprepared.[53] Those peasants not forced into the camps were made to join the kolkhoz, the communal farm. The "community" of the kolkhoz was not built on the traditional communal life of the village. Instead people were more or less thrown together, wrenched from their former lives. In the name of progress, they were given internal passports which made it all but impossible for them to leave their place of work. In the dark days before socialism when people were tied to the land, the political and economic system was called serfdom. Although living on the kolkhoz was probably less attractive than traditional serfdom (since conditions were not ameliorated by a rich peasant culture extending back generations) at least there was one noticeable improvement: serfdom was given a different name.[54]

[52] *Gulag III*, p. 363.

[53] Ibid. pp. 354–359.

[54] Solzhenitsyn makes a great deal of the destruction of the peasant way of life, its language, its customs, and most peculiar of all, its animals. For example, he points out that the Party was "pitiless to horses . . . because horses were a kulak animal and also destined to die." *Gulag II*, p. 91. By eliminating the farmer's means of production the Party was successful at changing the way farmers lived. For one thing they became dependent on industrialization, particularly as it applied to tractor factories.

Dogs were also singled out for extermination. They were rounded up, hauled off, or shot. Solzhenitsyn explains, as a means of attacking the individuality of their masters. Dogs, unlike Stalin, never lose sight of a most ancient verity of social life: one should help one's friends and hurt one's enemies. No matter how much propaganda the Party broadcast over the radio or printed in newspapers, dogs simply could not be convinced that their masters had become enemies of the people, to be dragged off in the middle of the night by strangers. Because dogs were beyond the control of the state they had to be eliminated.

Solzhenitsyn implies that the Party's loathing of these pets resulted from its Marxist orientation. The Progressive Doctrine states that man becomes man through labour. Hence his relationship to nature is instrumental and exploitative. If all of life is bound up in productive forces, surely so too are animals. They are useful or harmful according to whether they are necessary in a certain historical epoch. If one makes an animal a pet, however, one quickly learns, mostly from the animal, that although man may be the crowning achievement of nature, still, he is only one of its parts (in the so-called chain of being). Friendship between man and beast teaches man that his relationship with nature need not be exploitative and may be communal. *Gulag II*, pp. 429–430 note. Perhaps this is reading too much into it, but Solzhenitsyn's point seems to be that Marx had it wrong from the start. See *Writings of the Young Marx on Philosophy and History*, (trans. and ed.), Loyd Easton and Kurt Guddat (Doubleday, Garden City, New York, 1976), pp. 293, 308; on p. 422 Marx writes:

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Industrialization was not solely the burden of the peasants. The entire society was made to bear its weight. Solzhenitsyn does not give the typical explanation of how industrialization was accomplished—the Party seizing excess capital from the population and using it for industrial projects—rather he argues that the real contribution of the population was its share of sweat (or in this case, blood). There was simply no way Russia could have developed into a modern industrial economy (of the type the Party had in mind) without the use of forced labour. From a certain perspective the camps were an ideal solution to an almost intractable problem. They could provide labour with an absolute minimum outlay of resources. Work was obtained by a method learned from the Eskimos—a fish on a pole is held out in front of a running dog team. Continually driven by hunger, zeks were compelled to labour in return for their meagre ration of food.[55]

There was an even more important reason behind the creation of the camps, according to Solzhenitsyn. Dirty, distasteful and backbreaking labour could be extracted from workers without the enormous additional expense of providing them with a social infrastructure. Solzhenitsyn explains:

> The reason why the camps proved economically profitable had been foreseen as far back as Thomas More, the great-grandfather of socialism, in his *Utopia*. The labour of the zeks was needed for degrading and particularly heavy work, which no one under socialism would wish to perform. For work in remote and primitive localities where it would not be possible to construct housing, schools, hospitals, and stores for many years to come. For work with pick and spade—in the flowering of the twentieth century. For the erection of the great construction projects of socialism, when economic means for them did not yet exist.[56]

Gulag economics did have its cost, however. Solzhenitsyn estimates that the construction of the Belomor Canal cost a quarter of a million lives. A pet project of Stalin, the canal was built (with pick and shovel) in such haste that it was made too shallow to transport any but the smallest ships. In effect a quarter of a million lives were lost for nothing.[57] The zeks built useful things too.[58] Indeed, they succeeded in building socialism, or at least they were instrumental in industrializing Russia for their communist masters. In doing so, Solzhenitsyn argues, they showed that the camps were the main prop of the regime.[59] After all, if rapid industrialization

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Where a relationship does exist, it exists for me. The animal has no "relations" with anything, no relations at all. Its relations to others do not exist as relations. Consciousness is thus from the very beginning a social product and will remain so as long as men exist.

For a good discussion of the issue see Olivier Clement, *The Spirit of Solzhenitsyn*, trans. Sarah Fawcett and Paul Burns (Search Press Limited, London, 1976), pp. 104, 105.

[55] *Gulag II*, p. 78.

[56] Ibid. pp. 578–579.

[57] Ibid. p. 102.

[58] For a partial list see Ibid. pp. 591–593.

[59] Ibid. pp. 122, 198, 577–578; *Gulag III*, pp. 394, 494, 505.

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was necessary to fulfil the principles of the regime and the slave labour of the Gulag built the greater part of that industry, what other conclusion is possible?

Granting, as Solzhenitsyn does, that the terror was a necessary device to bring about modernization, one is led to raise further questions: why was modernization needed at all? More precisely, why was industrialization so dear to Stalin that it had to be accomplished immediately? The answer to that question, Solzhenitsyn suggests, cannot be found by looking solely to Stalin. Rather, it lies in the ideology which put so much stress on economic development. In almost all the policies he adopted, Stalin was aided by the ideas of Marxism–Leninism. His actions rarely deviated from the tenets of that doctrine. Solzhenitsyn states:

> We may justifiably wonder whether "Stalinism" is in fact a distinctive phenomenon. Did it ever exist? Stalin himself never tried to establish any distinctive doctrine (and given his intellectual limitations he could never have created one), nor any distinctive political system of his own. All Stalin's present-day admirers, champions and professional mourners in our country, as well as his followers in China, adamantly insist that he was a faithful Leninist and never in any matter of consequence diverged from Lenin. The author of these lines, who is this day landed in jail precisely because of his hatred of Stalin, whom he reproached with his departure from Lenin, must now admit that he cannot find, point to, or prove any substantial deviations.[60]

There was one important point of departure which Stalin made from the Progressive Doctrine. As Solzhenitsyn's portrait makes clear, Stalin was a tyrant and, seeking personal aggrandizement, he raised his own importance by lowering that of the Party:

> Stalin did perhaps manifestly depart from Lenin in one respect (though he was only following the general law of revolutions): in the ruthless treatment of his own party, which began in 1924 and rose to a climax in 1935. Can this be the decisive difference, the distinguishing mark which tells our present-day progressive historians that "Stalinism" belongs in the exclusive list of anti-human ideologies, whereas its maternal ideology does not?[61]

Despite this one difference Solzhenitsyn concludes that:

> . . . close study of our modern history shows that there never was any such thing as Stalinism (either as a doctrine, or as a path of national

[60] Alexander Solzhenitsyn, et al., *From Under the Rubble*, trans. A. M. Brock, et al. (Little Brown, Boston, 1975), pp. 8–9. In *Gulag I*, p. 613 note, he comments:

> Was not the land given to the peasants during the revolution only to be taken into state ownership soon afterwards . . .? Were not the factories promised to the workers, but brought under central administration in a matter of weeks? When did the trade unions begin to serve not the masses but the state? . . . What of the concentration camps (1918–1921)? . . . None of this was Stalin . . . [and even rapid industrialization] . . . again was not his invention.

[61] *From Under the Rubble*, pp. 9–10. We cannot consider here whether Lenin changed the ideas of Marx.

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> life, or as a state system), and official circles in our country, as well as the Chinese leaders, have every right to insist on this. Stalin was a very consistent and faithful—if also very untalented—heir to the spirit of Lenin's teaching.[62]

Finally, Solzhenitsyn maintains, no serious adherent of the Progressive Doctrine can subscribe to the idea of Stalinism or pin all the faults of the government on the personality cult. To do so would be an admission that human beings act to control history. To grant that a single individual, even a dictator, has such freedom of choice, would undermine the principle of historical necessity, the core of Marx's argument. In other words if Stalin is to blame for the terror, then men can direct history, Marx is wrong, and socialism is neither inevitable nor, for that matter, worthy of choice. Thus if a serious Marxist adopts the concept of "Stalinism," Solzhenitsyn reasons, he is logically driven to give up the theoretical underpinnings of Marxism. Yet the alternative is surely no more attractive. To embrace Marx's historical determinism one is compelled to admit that History's plan was at work in all the evil deeds, in all the suffering, in all the terror: it was all necessary and happened just the way it was supposed to.[63]

We can sum up Solzhenitsyn's position as follows. He assigns much of the blame for the terror to the peculiar personality of Stalin and to the wily Georgian's quest for personal aggrandizement. Yet in an important respect Stalin gained justification for his actions in the historical precedents set down during the reign of Lenin and, as a close analysis of the central book of the *Gulag Archipelago* would show, in the ideas of Marx.[64]

[62] Ibid. p. 10. Of his personal awareness of the fact Solzhenitsyn explains:

> In my pre-prison and prison years I, too, had long ago come to the conclusion that Stalin had set the course of the Soviet state. But then Stalin died quietly—and did the ship of state change course very noticeably? . . . All . . . followed the beaten path exactly as it had been sign-posted, step by step.

Solzhenitsyn admits elsewhere that the government did change after Stalin's demise. *Gulag III*, p. 445.

[63] Alexander Solzhenitsyn, "Solzhenitsyn Speaks," trans. Albert and Tanya Roberts, *National Review*, 6 June 1975, p. 606.

[64] See my "Solzhenitsyn on Marx: The Problem of Love of One's Own," *Teaching Political Science*, Winter 1986.

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Shalamov, Solzhenitsyn, and the Mission of Memory

Matt F. Oja

THE analytical comparison of the works of Varlam Shalamov and Alexander Solzhenitsyn is an intriguing and complex project, as yet to be comprehensively approached. It is an important undertaking, given their pre-eminence not just among those who write about the camps but also within contemporary Russian literature in general. John Glad has aptly noted that their respective statures in Russian literature bear a striking resemblance to those of Chekhov and Tolstoy at the turn of the century.[1] I intend to limit my discussion to one aspect of comparison: the theme of memory as a moral mission. Both Shalamov's and Solzhenitsyn's works are clearly imperative on the moral need to remember and to record the truth about Stalin's Gulag. However, because their respective missions stem from highly dissimilar sources, we should beware of overrating the significance of the mission of memory as an indication of similarity between the two writers.

It need hardly be emphasized that Solzhenitsyn views memory, that is the preservation of historical truth, as a mission: it is the predominant theme of *The Gulag Archipelago*. Characteristically, Solzhenitsyn expresses the mission in the preface of the first book by quoting a Russian proverb: "Dwell on the past and you'll lose an eye; forget the past and you'll lose both eyes."[2]

Nor does it require great insight to recognize that the source of Solzhenitsyn's sense of mission is his moral wrath, the ferocious righteousness with which he regards the Gulag system and the larger political structure which spawned it. His judgment is based upon an abstract distinction between good and evil, closely tied to religious considerations. Just as Spiridon Danilovich in *The First Circle* recognizes no ambiguity in questions of right and wrong—"I'll tell you: the wolfhound is right and the cannibal is wrong!"—so Solzhenitsyn makes his absolute judgment: telling lies or even keeping quiet about the camps is evil; remembering and telling the world is good.

One very obvious difference between these two authors is that Solzhenitsyn is a crusader, which Shalamov is not. Not only does Solzhenitsyn feel the mission of memory, but his dedication to it has drawn him into non-literary realms of propagandizing and political advocacy. In contrast, Shalamov most emphatically avoided dissident activity and politics in general. While it is difficult to believe that he subscribed to, much less authored, the officialese platitudes of the

[1] Varlam Shalamov, *Graphite*, trans. John Glad. (W. W. Norton & Company, New York, 1981), p. 16.

[2] Alexander Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago*, (Harper & Row, New York, 1973), p. x.

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infamous 1972 letter published in his name in *Literaturnaya Gazeta* ("Some anti-Soviet journals have decided to take advantage of the honest name of a Soviet writer . . ." etc.),[3] in any case it is clear that he was not a crusader like Solzhenitsyn.

However, this does not mean that he did not share the latter's sense of memory from Nadezhda Mandelshtam's description of her search, after the 20th Party Congress, for clues about her husband's fate.[4] Her concern with the moral obligation to remember is apparent in her account of her interviews with ex-*zeks* from the Kolyma who might have some information about Osip's death. She fears that too many former prisoners are suffering from the malaise of her acquaintance Kazarnovsky, whose "memory was like a huge, rancid pancake in which fact and fancy from his prison days had been mixed up together and baked into an inseparable mass."[5] She writes:

> Listening to these accounts, I was horrified at the thought that there might be nobody who could ever properly bear witness to the past. Whether inside or outside the camps, we had all lost our memories.[6]

However, she does add optimistically that "there were people who had made it their aim from the beginning not only to save themselves, but to survive as witnesses."[7] She met a number of these "relentless keepers of the truth," who "came through the ordeal like heroes, not only living to tell the tale but preserving the keenness of memory that enables them to do so."[8] Although she does not name him, Nadezhda Mandelshtam is certainly referring here to Shalamov. The two first met during her investigation into Osip's fate, and, drawn together by their common need to remember, they became close friends until Shalamov's death.

Shalamov has described this bond between Nadezhda Mandelshtam and himself metaphorically in one of his best stories, *Sententious*. Dedicated to her, it is among his most direct treatments of the theme of memory. The story begins:

> People materialized out of nowhere—one after another. A stranger would lie down next to me on my berth and nestle against my bony shoulder in the night, giving me his pitiful warmth and receiving my own in exchange. There were nights when no warmth at all penetrated the rags of my jacket and padded vest, and in the morning I would think my neighbour was dead and be surprised that he would rise in response to a shouted command, get dressed, and submissively obey the order.[9]

[3] "V Redaktsiyu Literaturnoi Gazety," *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, 23 Feb. 1972.
[4] Nadezhda Mandelshtam, *Hope Against Hope*, trans. Max Hayward, (Atheneum, New York, 1983), Chapter 82.
[5] Ibid. p. 379.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Ibid. pp. 378–9.
[9] Varlam Shalamov, *Kolyma Tales*, trans. John Glad, (W. W. Norton & Company, New York, 1980), p. 70.

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At first sight this is a straightforward description of life in a transit camp, it is also an effective metaphor for Nadezhda Mandelshtam's search for clues about Osip's death: one ex-*zek* after another would visit her, share a bit of life and warmth—that is to say, memory—and then "disappear forever in the day." Some gave more warmth, some less: and some, it seemed, had none at all: Kazarnovsky, for example. This opening paragraph ends with what is probably another reference to Mandelshtam's interviewing process:

> I didn't know the people who slept at my side. I never asked them questions. There is an Arab saying: "He who asks no questions will be told no lies." I couldn't have cared less whether I was being told lies or the truth. The camp criminals have a saying which is even more appropriate here—it expresses a deep contempt for the questioner: "If you don't believe it, take it as a fairy tale." I neither asked questions nor listened to fairy tales.[10]

Mandelshtam in her search, of course, did not share this wretched *dokhodiag's* attitude: she both asked and listened.

ALTHOUGH played in a minor key throughout, the theme of memory as a moral duty is present in many of Shalamov's stories. Like Solzhenitsyn, Shalamov feels the moral pressure to record his experiences in order to preserve historical truth. This is clearest in *Lend Lease*, as the narrator describes his sudden realization that "much can be hidden in the folds of the mountain":

> And then I remembered the greedy blaze of the fireweed, the furious blossoming of the taiga in summer when it tried to hide in grass and foliage any deed of man—good or bad. And if I forget, the grass will forget. But the permafrost and the stone will not forget.[11]

Shalamov has set up a neat metaphor here: though in the permafrost the thousands of corpses will never decay, they can be covered by grass and stone; and though the guilt and crimes of Kolyma will always remain, they can be forgotten and covered with falsehood. The grass forgets, and the shiny blade of the American bulldozer bears no traces: human memory is the only way for the truth to be preserved. This moral imperative is also stressed in *The Procurator of Judea*, in which Shalamov compares a young officer's ability, after a determined effort, to forget a particularly cruel incident, to Pilate's ability to forget Christ.

One trouble with remembering, however, is that for the average ex-prisoner it is far more difficult and painful than forgetting. As Nadezhda Mandelshtam notes, for the ex-*zek* "it was all too common to succumb to the temptations to make terms with reality and live out one's life in peace."[12] Shalamov acknowledges this reality. His own experience has taught him that:

[10] Ibid.
[11] Ibid. p. 180.
[12] Mandelshtam, *op. cit.* p. 379.

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> . . . a human being survives by his ability to forget. Memory is always ready to blot out the bad and retain only the good.[13]

Shalamov is altogether far more tolerant than Solzhenitsyn of his fellow *zeks* who lack the strength to remember. This explains why his treatment of the mission of memory is subdued in comparison with Solzhenitsyn's. For Shalamov the moral imperative is not absolute, nor externally imposed: any individual might recognize and understand it, but then again he might not. Indeed, at times Shalamov, far from censuring them, seems to envy those who can forget, since he knows that he himself cannot. Remembering is terrible for all ex-*zeks*; but for those who feel the mission of memory, forgetting is even more terrible. Shalamov obviously includes himself in the latter group. As he concludes in *The Seizure*, one of the very few stories set after the narrator's release from camp:

> The doctor asked me something, and I answered with difficulty. I was not afraid of memories.[14]

As mentioned above, Solzhenitsyn's mission of memory is closely tied to abstract moral criteria, which in turn are the product of the spiritual purification or "ascent" which he experienced in camp. It is a curious paradox, freely acknowledged by Solzhenitsyn, that he owes his enlightened perspective, his monopoly on truth, to the very system he so profoundly hates. Shalamov, by contrast, experienced no such ascent, nor any beneficial side effects from life in the camp. He states his position simply and unequivocally:

> The camps are a negative school of life in every respect. Nobody will ever learn anything useful or valuable from them.[15]

Shalamov has based his understanding of the mission of memory upon quite different considerations.

SHALAMOV'S camp experience is distinct from those of other Gulag writers in one essential respect—other writers describe their good fortunes in escaping prolonged stints on general work assignments in the mines or the forest by procuring some kind of privileged occupation. Solzhenitsyn made it into Mavrino *sharaga*, for example, and Evgenia Ginzburg worked as a doctor, teacher, piano player, etc. Shalamov did not seek such positions. Though he was eventually trained and worked as a medical assistant, for years on end he remained on the general work details, evidently as a matter of principle. As a result of the unimaginable brutality of the work in the Kolyma, he came to understand a world which other writers only report at second hand: the world of the *dokhodiagi*, or "goners." Most of Shalamov's tales portray camp life

[13] Shalamov, *Kolyma Tales*, p. 66.
[14] Shalamov, *Graphite*, p. 167.
[15] The quotation is from Geoffrey Hosking's translation. "The Ultimate Circle of the Stalinist Inferno." *New Universities Quarterly*, Vol. 34, Spring 1980, p. 162; John Glad's translation is slightly different: see *Graphite*, p. 195.

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through the eyes of these wretches, this wasted human slag spewn out of the gold and lead mines; and it is this perspective which chiefly accounts for the extraordinary power and horror of his work.

This perspective also shaped Shalamov's vision of the nature of life and death. Central to the author's philosophical outlook is the idea that man is not faced with a simple choice between life and death, but with a spectrum or continuum of infinitely fine gradations between the two. At one end is full, human life, and at the other is death; but in between there is a descending scale of moral and even physical states which are neither. In the Kolyma it doesn't take long for the work, cold, hunger and humiliation to reduce any man to something less than human, and then further to something less than alive—but not yet dead. These lowest nether regions of existence, far closer to death than to life, are the realm of the *dokhodiagi*. Like Zeno's runner, they approach infinitesimally close, within one spoonful of *kasha*, to death—until there is practically no difference between their technically living bodies at one instant and their corpses at the next.

For Shalamov, existence in the Kolyma consists of constant motion along this continuum, either towards death or away from it. Luck and misfortune are marked by changes in direction: setbacks or recoveries, relapses or miracles. The concept of motion between life and death is best illustrated by such stories as *Dominoes*, *Condensed Milk*, *Carpenters*, *Shock Therapy*, and *Sententious*. In the last, the narrator describes the sensation of moving back away from death:

> But death, just recently so near, began to ease away little by little. Death was replaced not by life, but by semi-consciousness, an existence which had no formula and could not be called life.[16]

Shalamov's vision of life and death is closely tied to his peculiar animism (John Glad calls it "pantheistic surrealism")[17] which is especially visible in his descriptions of nature, clearest of all in *Fire and Water*, where the dreamlike, almost mystical images of nature are reminiscent of Prishvin or Grin; but animism is pervasive in his work. Inanimate objects or flora are constantly anthropomorphized: "Trees in the north die lying down—like people,"[18] or "The terrible muscular strength of the water was like that of a wrestler."[19] For Shalamov, the distinction between organic and inorganic, alive and dead, animal and vegetable, man and beast are by no means clear or constant:

> After all, a stone is not born a stone, but a soft, oily creature. A creature, and not a thing. A stone becomes a thing in old age.[20]
>
> Even a stone didn't seem dead to me, not to mention the grass, the

[16] *Kolyma Tales*, p. 70.
[17] *Graphite*, p. 17.
[18] *Kolyma Tales*, p. 62.
[19] *Graphite*, p. 101.
[20] *Kolyma Tales*, p. 176.

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> trees, the river. The river was not only the incarnation of life, but life itself. It possessed eternal movement, calm, a silent and secret language of its own . . .[21]

Even the taiga is portrayed as a living organism, able at times to avenge evil (as in *Tamara the Bitch*), but nonetheless a "green procurator" in league with the prisoners' tormentors. And of course the prisoners, at various stages of un-death, are constantly compared to horses, dogs, dwarf cedars, tundra grass, even stones. Shalamov's belief that the same set of rules applies to all these equally is simply a result of his own observations: after all, the *dokhodiag* passes through stages between life and death in which he really does resemble these things more than a human being.

IF the prisoners' existence in the Kolyma consists of constant motion towards or away from death, what is it that marks or measures that motion? Certainly, it is partly the physical condition of the *zek*: Shalamov offers ample detail of the scurvy, frostbite, emaciation and exhaustion which are symptoms of the lower end of the spectrum. But he consistently suggests that the worst symptom of the most dangerous stages of deterioration is psychological: the loss of consciousness of one's own humanity, which is in the profoundest sense a loss of memory. All the most desperate goners in Shalamov's tales are characterized by their lack of humanity:

> All human emotions—love, friendship, envy, concern for one's fellow man, compassion, honesty, longing for fame—had left us with the flesh that had melted from our bodies during their long fasts.[22]

But what is important is the fact that not just the emotions themselves, but even the concept that such feelings exist is lost to the goners. Thus in *Condensed Milk* what is so remarkable and moving is not the narrator's refusal to share his two cans of milk, but the fact that the very idea, the very possibility that anyone might ever share anything, never occurs to him or to his comrades.

> "Let's have a spoon," said Shestakov, turning to the labourers surrounding us. Licked clean, ten glistening spoons were stretched out over the table. Everyone stood and watched as I ate. No one was indelicate about it, nor was there the slightest expectation that they might be allowed to participate. None of them could even hope that I would share this milk with them. Such things were unheard of. . . . I sat down so as to be more comfortable and drank the milk without any bread, washing it down from time to time with cold water. I finished both cans. The audience disappeared. . . . The show was over.[23]

For Shalamov, the state of one's memory is the most crucial barometer of

[21] Ibid. p. 123.
[22] *Ibid.* p. 56.
[23] Ibid. p. 184.

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progress or regress along the spectrum between life and death. Memory disappears progressively as a prisoner moves into the realm of the *dokhodiag*, which is to say. closer to death (incidentally, Evgenia Ginzburg also noticed this phenomenon, though at second-hand);[24] and as he recovers it begins to resurface. The process of the recovery of memory—and not just the simple memory of words and facts, but of sensations, emotions, one's very humanity—is especially directly examined in *Sententious* and *Dominoes*. In the latter, the narrator is brought to the hospital as a chronic *dokhodiag*:

> I could only pronounce words slowly and with difficulty, as if translating from a foreign language. I had forgotten everything. I didn't even remember what it was like to remember.[25]

In the hospital he is given humane treatment and brought back to life. The ultimate proof of his recovery is presented at the very end of the story, as he detects in himself the return of a capacity for shame at not having thought to share his bread or cigarette with a fellow patient.

Sententious focuses on a change of direction in the narrator's existence, a turn away from death and towards recovery. The *zek*'s recovery is characterized by the return of his memory of various features of his humanity: first a consciousness of the groans and wheezing of his barrack mates, then a "reduced need for sleep, forgetfulness, unconsciousness"; then pain, fear, envy, and pity for animals. Later still, culture begins to return, symbolized by the educated vocabulary which the narrator had long forgotten. One word, "sententious," appeared first in his mind.

> "Sententious! Sententious!"
> I roared with laughter.
> "Sententious!" I shouted directly to the northern sky, into the double dawn, still not understanding the meaning of the word that had been born within me. And if the word had returned, then all the better! A great joy filled me.[26]

The source of this joy is the narrator's awareness of his returning memory, an indication of his return to human life.

IT is clear that Shalamov is concerned with memory in two distinct ways: on the one hand, rather as Solzhenitsyn sees it—as a moral mission, a duty to historical truth; and on the other, as a symptom of humanity, which he has observed at first hand over many years of horrifying experience. Put this way it is clear that these are not distinct ideas, but two faces of the same one—or rather, one is the direct product of the other, a moral conclusion drawn from empirical evidence. Shalamov understands the mission of memory precisely *because* he has seen with his own eyes what an essential component of human life it is. He

[24] See for example Ginzburg's description of Elena Nikolaevna Sulimova in *Within the Whirlwind*, (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, New York, 1981), p. 20.
[25] *Graphite*, p. 49.
[26] *Kolyma Tales*, pp. 74–5.

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knows that he must remember because he has seen what it means to forget.

This leads to the difference between the sources of Shalamov's and Solzhenitsyn's missions: Solzhenitsyn's arises from his idealism (not to say mysticism), his preoccupation with ethereal, absolute Truth; while Shalamov's is materialistic, arising from years of observation of concrete phenomena in the real, though extraordinarily inhumane, world. Naturally, this difference is partly a reflection of the difference in experience of the two writers. Solzhenitsyn, as is often noted, never sank to nearly the level of degradation which Shalamov knew in the camps, while Shalamov never experienced the spiritual "ascent" which so profoundly influenced Solzhenitsyn's idealist perspective. This idealist/materialist contrast is also generally relevant to many of the differences between the authors' thematic concerns and prose styles—which, as Geoffrey Hoskings has rightly observed, are about as different as it is possible to imagine.[27]

As noted above, a more comprehensive critical comparison of these two outstanding writers remains to be undertaken. Such a study might focus on the paradoxical areas where their superficial similarities actually result from or imply more profound differences. The theme of memory as a mission is one such area.

[27] Hoskings, op. cit. p. 162.

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Some Economics of Utopia: The Case of Full Communism*

Frederic L. Pryor

SPECULATIONS about the operations of a communist system appear an important component of economic and political thought over the last two and a half millenia. A long line of utopian thinkers have described their vision of the communist society in loving detail. From this rich tradition[1] I focus in this essay only upon the ideas of Marx and Engels. My purposes are three: to describe their view of the economy of the future; to specify some critical assumptions; and to investigate how such a system would function if some of the critical assumptions were not met.

The analysis of the functioning of an economic system with the same form as pure communism but without certain critical assumptions being met is carried out on two levels. First, I use a static approach often associated with neo-classical economics, but leavened with attention to certain questions which are seldom discussed. Then I examine such an economy in terms of its long term trends of development, focusing on a series of questions often raised by Marxist economists, but seldom with reference to socialist systems.

To avoid confusion, let me add that it is not my intention to discuss the functioning of the economic systems of nations now dominated by parties with a Marxist ideology, to make comparisons between Marxist ideals and Soviet reality, or to examine in detail the vast Soviet literature about full communism which others have summarized and analyzed.[2]

ALTHOUGH Marx and Engels are not completely consistent in their definition of "communism," it seems useful to use the distinction

* This essay is one of a series dealing with the economic visions of various religious and political groups. I would like to thank Thompson Bradley, Aron Katsenelinboigen, Nancy Love, Braulio Muñoz, Zora Pryor and S. Gomulka for their useful comments on earlier drafts; it should be emphasized that they are not responsible for my interpretations or errors.

Most references to the writings of Marx and Engels are made in three parts. The first refers to the common English title; the second to the year in which the particular passage was written; and the third to the volume and page number of either Karl Marx, Frederick Engels *Collected Works*, (International Publisher, New York, 1875), henceforth referred to as MECW, which currently contains English versions of their writings up to about 1860; or to the Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels *Werke* (Dietz Verlag, East Berlin, 1962), henceforth MEW.

[1] Summarized by numerous writers such as Gray (1946).

[2] E.g. Theodore Denno, *The Communist Millenium: The Soviet View* (Nijhoff, The Hague, 1964); John Taylor Farr, *The Stateless Society: The Communist Doctrine of the Withering Away of the State*, Ph.D. dissertation, University of Texas, 1969; Jerome Martin Gilison, *The Soviet Image of the Future Communist Society: A Critical Analysis of Contemporary Doctrine*, Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1965; Walter Laqueur and Leopold Labedz, (eds.), *The Future of Communist Society*, (Praeger, New York, 1962); "Symposium of the Future Communist Society," in *Problems of Communism*, Vol. 11, No. 6 (Nov. 1962); or Daniel Tarschys, *The End of Politics: Marxist Thought on the Withering Away of the State*, Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1972.

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which Marx specified rather late in his life[3] when he defined two stages of development following the victorious revolution of the proletariat. The first stage is *Socialism*, where the distribution principle to the able bodied can be roughly stated as "each gives according to his ability, each receives according to his work." The second stage is *Communism*, where the distribution principle is "each gives according to his ability, each receives according to his need."

This definition of communism gives rise to a number of problems, for example, the meaning of "need" or the relation of this economic system to other attributes of communism which he specified on other occasions. Soviet theorizers also distinguish a number of sub-phases within the first stage and between the first and second stages, which I do not discuss. The focus of this essay is on the second stage, which is designated below as full communism or the communist economic system.

The most striking statements about communism are contained in the early philosophical writings of Marx and Engels. For instance, in his *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*[4] Marx wrote: "Communism, therefore, is the complete return of man to himself as a *social* (i.e. human) being—a return accomplished consciously and embracing the entire wealth of previous development. This communism, as fully developed naturalism, equals humanism . . . it is a *genuine* resolution of the conflict between man and nature and between man and man." This quotation illustrates well the humanistic vision (at least in their early years) which underlay their ideas about communism and the intimate link they saw between society and economy.

According to most commentators of all ideological stripes, neither Marx nor Engels seriously addressed the question of how full communism would actually function. The basis of this general, but misleading opinion, rests on one or more of the following arguments:

> —Their best known statements about full communism are of the abstract character of the above quotation.
>
> —Detailed specification of the functioning of full communism runs against the spirit of Marx's approach. Because our conception of human nature is grounded only in the specific historical epochs in which we have lived throughout our history, we lack the requisite knowledge to be able to predict human nature in a more liberating set of social conditions. According to this doctrine of *praxis*, we must let the generation establishing full communism develop their economic institutions and procedures according to the lessons which they learn in trying to implement such an economic system. Further, drawing up a blueprint for full communism which must be followed would deprive future generations of their freedom to create their future.
>
> —Since communism is inevitable, it makes little sense to concern ourselves with the details of how the system will operate.

[3] *Critique of the Gotha Program* (1875; MEW Vol. 19, p. 20ff).
[4] MECW Vol. 3, p. 396.

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—Based on certain assumptions about the nature of technology (discussed below), Marx and Engels also seemed to imply that the operations of such an economic system would be relatively simple and not worth worrying about.

—On several occasions in their later years Marx and Engels specifically refused to discuss the details of full communism. For instance, in one essay[5] Engels wrote: "Since we do not wish to make utopian systems for the establishment of the future society, it is not really necessary to go into the question." This position has been given lip service by many subsequent Marxists (Lenin, for example).[6] In passing, however, it should be noted that this precedent has not prevented Soviet and other Marxist economists from writing a considerable amount on the topic, particularly in the years around the 21st (1959) and 22nd (1962) Party Congresses of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.[7]

Although it seems perfectly reasonable to believe that Marx and Engels did not write very much about full communism, leafing through their collected writings yields quite a different picture. We can find several hundred references to communism, and although most of these discussions are short and repetitive, they provide a coherent picture of full communism which deserves analysis.

Before reviewing these scattered references, two of the most general and basic underlying assumptions of Marx and Engles must always be kept in mind: first, human nature is not invariant and behaviour is strongly shaped by the social environment into which individuals are placed.[8] Second, full communism is not invariant so that different methods of

[5] "On the Housing Problem" (1872; MEW Vol. 18, p. 226).

[6] Lenin wrote in *State and Revolution* (International Publisher, New York, 1932—orig. 1917), p. 35: ". . . in the *Communist Manifesto* Marx answered this question [what will happen after the revolution] in a purely abstract manner, stating the problems rather than the methods of solving them . . . Without resorting to utopias, Marx waited for the *experience* of a mass movement to produce the answer to the problem as to the exact forms which this organization of the proletariat as the ruling class will assume and as to the exact manner in which this organization will be combined with the most complete, most consistent establishment of democracy."

[7] It is interesting to speculate about why discussion of utopias flare up at particular times. In the case of the Soviet discussion (which did not occur in Eastern Europe), three reasons may be given. a) The Soviets were engaged in ideological polemics against China (representing the "Left") and Yugoslavia (representing the "Right") and used this discussion about pure communism as an ideological weapon; b) Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalin at the 20th Party Congress in 1956 destabilized the government and the (guided) discussion about pure communism was an attempt by the government to regain legitimacy; c) Khrushchev actually believed in the feasibility and desirability of pure communism and wanted to energize the Soviet nation by sharing his vision of the future.

[8] Although the views of human nature of Marx and Engels are complex, a good one paragraph summary can be found in their book *The Holy Family* where they discuss some French socialist writers and approvingly note, "There is no need for any great penetration to see from the teachings of materialism on the original goodness and equal intellectual endowment of men, the omnipotence of experience, habit and education, and the influence of environment etc., how necessarily materialism is connected with communism and socialism. If man draws all his knowledge, sensation, etc. from the world of the senses and the experience gained in it, then what has to be done is to arrange the empirical world in such a way that man experiences and becomes accustomed to what is truly human in it and that he becomes aware of himself as man. If correctly understood as interest in the principle of all morality, man's private interests must be made to coincide with the interest of humanity." (1845; MECW Vol. 4, p. 136).

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allocation might be followed on a communist economic system as the economy becomes more developed.[9]

ACCORDING to scattered references in the writings of Marx and Engels, full communism has the following characteristics:

1. High productivity. An absolute prerequisite to communism is a level of productivity to provide for the basic physical and social needs of all. Until people are able to obtain food, drink, housing and clothing, as well as certain social and cultural services in adequate quantity and quality, the struggle for necessities and the destructive agencies of nature are dominant; and a truly social existence is impossible.[10] The question of the determination of needs raises some important questions which are discussed below. However, the exact level of economic development which is necessary for communism is rather ambiguous. Since Marx and Engels considered Europe ripe for the revolution in the mid-nineteenth century, some crude estimates can be made. Roughly speaking, the per capita GDP of the United Kingdom in 1848 was slightly less than 20 per cent that of the UK in 1980.[11] This means that England at that time had less or roughly the same per capita GDP as nations such as Brazil, Mexico, Lebanon, Iran, or Jamaica have in the 1980s. The appropriate level of productivity for the inauguration of full communism seems to have eluded a number of leaders of the Soviet Union as well, for both Lenin and Khrushchev placed the coming of communism (or, in more cautious moments, the establishment of the material basis of communism) in the Soviet Union about 15 to 20 years in the future.[12] Of

[9] This viewpoint was strongly stated in Engels' letter to Otto von Boenigk (1890; MEW Vol. 37, p. 447) and in his letter to Conrad Schmidt (1890; MEW Vol. 37, p. 436) when he noted: ". . . with the increase in production and changes in social organization, the methods of distribution [in communism] should also change."

[10] A particularly interesting statement on this matter is contained in *German Ideology* (1845–47; MECW Vol. 5, p. 38) where Marx and Engels argue: "People cannot be liberated as long as they are unable to obtain food, drink, housing, and clothing in adequate quantity and quality." This is because at a low level of economic development (Ibid. p. 49) ". . . *Want* is merely made more general and with *want* the struggle for necessities would begin again, and all of the old filthy business would necessarily be restored; and furthermore, because only with the universal development of productive forces is a *universal* intercourse between men established, which on the one side produces in *all* nations simultaneously the phenomenon of the "propertyless" mass (universal competition) making each nation dependent on the revolution of the others, and finally puts *world historical* individuals in place of local ones. Without this, a) communism would only exist as a local phenomenon; b) the *forces* of intercourse themselves could not have developed as *universal*, hence unendurable powers; and c) each extension of intercourse would abolish local communism. Empirically, communism is only possible as the act of the dominant people "all at once" and simultaneously, which presupposes the universal development of the productive forces and the world intercourse bound up with them." In sum, according to Marx, (Letter to the Labour Parliament, 1854; MECW Vol. 13, p. 58ff.) ". . . the real basis of a new society [is] modern industry, which transformed the destructive forces of nature into the productive power of man . . ."

[11] Data on gross national product and population for the UK from 1848 to 1979 come from Angus Maddison, *Phases of Capitalist Development*, (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1982). The relative per capita GDPs of the UK and other countries in the 1970s come from Robert Summers and Alan Heston "Improved International Comparisons of Real Product and its Components, 1950–1980," *Review of Income and Wealth*, 30, No. 2 (June 1984), pp. 207–62.

[12] In his 1920 address to the Komsomol Lenin placed communism 10 to 20 years in the future: V. I. Lenin, "The Tasks of the Youth Leagues," address to the Third All-Russia Congress of the Russian Young Communist League, reprinted in Robert C. Tucker, *The Lenin Anthology*, (W. W. Norton, New

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course, Marxists argue that any static comparisons concerning the level of per capita GNP at the moment of the arrival of communism are somewhat misleading since Marx and Engels believed that communism eliminates waste and unleashes the true productive powers of modern industry, so that per capita production in communism would increase rapidly once such a system was established.

2. Technology. Marx and Engels saw technology as an extremely important social force. Since their assumptions about technology underlie their ideas about high productivity (and, correspondingly, a short working week), this aspect of their system deserves examination. Of course, it is well known that both saw the use of machinery invading all spheres of production, and even housework,[13] and that presumably all work would be carried out in the same manner as in a factory. Their analysis of capitalism also suggests that they believed economies of scale to be unlimited.[14] But several other aspects of their views (or lack of views) of technology are equally important:

a) **Homogenization of labour.** Technology decreases the skill content of particular jobs and increases the ease of mastering them. When either Marx or Engels talked about modern technology, they usually used three examples: the steam engine, the power loom, and automatic spinning equipment (toward the end of their lives they also added the railway). These types of technologies lead to a relatively undifferentiated labour force, where skills can be easily learned. They saw this homogenization of work occurring in various ways. For instance, Engels[15] emphasized that modern technology reduces each task to its simplest elements and to repeated operations. Or Marx noted in a newspaper article[16] that each new division of labour denigrates the traditional skill of the craftsmen. Given this kind of assumption, we can understand the reasoning underlying their striking remark that ". . . in communist society, where nobody has one exclusive sphere activity, but each can become accomplished in any branch he wishes, society regulates the general production and thus makes it possible for me to do one thing today and

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York, 1975), pp. 661–674. Around 1960 Khrushchev saw communism (alternatively, the "material basis of communism") 15 to 20 years away (citations are presented by Leopold Labedz, "The New CPSU Program," in Walter Laqueur and Leopold Labedz, op. cit. pp. 12–19). The control figures of the very long term plan which were approved by the 21st Party Congress of the CPSU in 1959 foresaw the material preconditions for communism met in 15 years.

[13] For instance, in the draft of a letter sent to Gertrud Guillaume Schack (1881; MEW Vol. 36, p. 341). Engels notes that "a true liberation of men and women will become a reality, in my opinion, when exploitation through Capital is eliminated and private household work is transformed into private industry." Of course, this quotation implies much more than the mere mechanization of housework.

[14] Although I have found no citation which states this belief in unlimited economies of scale, this assumption underlies their entire discussion of why capitalist large-scale industry drives capitalist small-scale industry into bankruptcy so that there is a centralization and concentration of production. This belief that production units (industrial establishments and enterprises) become increasingly larger over time is one of the several bases on which I conclude below that full communism will have a highly centralized economy. It is noteworthy that this belief in unlimited economies of scale has also been held by later Marxists such as Lenin; indeed, it has led some Marxist writers to speak of the "national centralization of the means of production" which would occur in pure communism.

[15] "Principles of Communism," (1847; MECW Vol. 6, pp. 341–2).

[16] 1849; MECW Vol. 8, p. 266.

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another tomorrow, to hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening, criticize after dinner, just as I have a mind, without becoming hunter, fisherman, shepherd, or critic."[17] The assumption about technology homogenizing labour also seems to underlie their declaration that in communism the differences between country and city as well as between manual and mental work will disappear (in so far as automation does not eliminate all manual work). Although these are usually interpreted in a social sense, (i.e. that the division or labour is destructive to human personality in creating a one-sidedness which must be overcome if our human potential is to be realized), such remarks imply that the skill contents of the different jobs associated with urban, rural, manual, and mental work become more similar over the course of development. In recent years some Soviet economists have taken a different stand[18] and some such as Kogan[19] claim that no one will simultaneously be able to be a specialist in several branches of the economy but people will move from job to job within closely related fields.[20] Western Marxists have veered from this notion in some interesting ways.[21]

Although technology may simplify certain jobs, new jobs are being created as technology develops which may require more skills, and I find their assumption about technology simplifying jobs and reducing the needs for special skills to be dubious. Further, the very process of technological change creates the needs for new skills, which makes the labour force heterogeneous. Despite these empirical objections, their assumption about homogenization is important in the structure of both their political and economic ideas. In analyzing the politics within capitalist states, certainly the development of a homogeneous labour force would accelerate the creation of a single working-class consciousness. It would also simplify the organization of the labour force as a unified political force in capitalism, since splits between various

[17] *The German Ideology*, (1845–47; MECW Vol. 5, p. 47).

[18] The debate is summarized by Gilison, op. cit. Chapter 3.

[19] L. N. Kogan, "The Nature of Work in the Future Communist Society," *Voprosy Filosofii*, No. 2, 1960, trans. in *The Soviet Review*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (Aug. 1960), pp. 18–27.

[20] Lenin also shared the belief in the homogenization of labour and once wrote (*State and Revolution*, p. 83): "Accounting and control—these are the *chief* things necessary for the organizing and correct functioning of the *first phase* of communist society . . . The accounting and control necessary for this have been *simplified* by capitalism to the utmost, till they have become extraordinarily simple operations of watching, recording, and issuing receipts, within the reach of anyone who can read and write and knows the first four rules of arithmetic." Some Soviet views on homogenization became much more sophisticated, e.g. Aron I. Katsenelinboigen, "Main Problems of Raising Workers' Skills Under Conditions of Intensive Technical Progress," in G. V. Osipov, (ed.), *Industry and Labour in the USSR* (Tavistock, London, 1966), pp. 207–223, argued that although traditional occupations may require less skill, a whole series of new occupations are being created which require higher education or longer or more continual training.

[21] This changing skill content of jobs at higher levels of technology is a difficult problem which to my mind has not yet been satisfactorily answered. In the USA Harry Braverman, *Labour and Monopoly Capitalism*, (Monthly Review Press, New York, 1974) presents an interesting variation on this theme when he argues that although technology *per se* does not lead to the homogenization of labour, monopoly capitalists select those technologies with this effect so as to be better able to control their labour force. Although one may dispute this thesis, he does present considerable data showing the "deskilling" effects of automation.

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groups of workers on the basis of different skills or place in the production process would not occur and no "aristocracy of labour" would be found to divide and confuse working-class action. Further, the maintenance of a classless society in communism would be easier, for there would be no structural features of production around which different groups or classes could coalesce. The economic implications are also very important. As the level of productivity rises after the revolution, this homogenization of labour would facilitate the disappearance of prices and money, for it would reduce the difficulties in allocation arising from the necessity of taking account of a large number of quite different labour skills. Accounting and planning could be more easily carried out in terms of "labour units" because of the ability of all to carry out a variety of jobs, and thus administration would be easier. In sum, labour homogenization would greatly simplify the functioning of the communist economic system. If labour is becoming more homogeneous, then it also might be inferred that human material wants are becoming more similar. This would aid planning by simplifying the planning of the pattern of consumption goods.

b) **Ease of technological improvement.** Although Marx and Engels foresee the level of technology in pure communism to be high, they do not appear to make any assumptions about whether technological change becomes easier or more difficult at higher levels of economic development. To put this question in a different way, does a unit of resources invested in research and development lead to an ever increasing or ever decreasing amount of technical change in the society? An answer is important for several reasons. An accelerating rate of technological change makes the attainment of pure communism easier. Further, accelerating technology acts to offset any tendencies towards diminishing returns in the future which arise because natural resources and agricultural land are limited. (Neither Marx nor Engels appeared to believe that such diminishing returns were very important, but this does not mean that we should, on this account, neglect the subject.)

What are the facts? In the nineteenth century technological change appeared to accelerate and, in many nations, so did the growth rate of per capita production. This trend led certain nineteenth-century utopian thinkers to place their entire faith in technology to achieve their ideal society. However, in the twentieth century technological change appeared to be decelerating up to the end of World War II; and then, after two decades of spectacular technological growth, growth rates of GNP per capita have markedly slowed down (and, moreover, this retardation is greater at higher levels of economic development).[22]

Marx and Engels' theoretical discussion of this matter has often been misinterpreted. At first, their discussion of the behaviour of macroeconomic aggregates appears to have some bearing on the

[22] Frederic L. Pryor, "Growth and Fluctuations of Aggregate Production in O.E.C.D. and East European Nations," *World Politics*, 37, No. 2 (Jan. 1985), pp. 204–38.

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problem. Sweezy shows that it is necessary for the organic composition of capital to rise faster than the rate of surplus value if the profit rate is to fall.[23] If this is occurring and if wages are held constant, it can also be shown that this implies that the capital/labour ratio grows as fast or faster than half the rate of increase in labour productivity. However, when one experiments with the algebra of this model to derive various growth paths, there seems to be little reason for believing that Marx or Engels held technological change to be increasing or decreasing.[24] However, Marx and Engels should not be faulted, for at the present time it does not appear that we know enough to answer the question ourselves in any rigorous fashion. It is possible that the current slow-down in technological change will be reversed once breakthroughs in the harnessing of fusion power, biogenetics, and robotry technology take place. It is also possible that the stock of "easy inventions" has been used up, that we have mastered most of the secrets of nature, and that future changes in technology will become increasingly more expensive. The cost of technological change can also remain about constant, but growth can slow down as the world runs up against increasing costs for the extraction of raw materials or the growing of food.

c) **Nature of the production function.** Over time, Marx and Engels foresaw a substitution of capital for labour in the production process. They did not, however, seem to discuss whether the number of processes for producing a given good or service is increasing or decreasing. If technology is developing in a fashion such that the isoquants are becoming increasingly L-shaped, then planning an efficient pattern of production becomes much easier than if planners faced many different processes of producing each good.

3. Organization of the economy. In numerous passages Marx and Engels touch on the organization of the means of production and the methods by which scarce resources would be allocated. These deserve a brief review.

a) **Elimination of Private Ownership of the Means of Production.** This

[23] Paul Sweezy, *The Theory of Capitalist Development*, (Monthly Review Press, New York, 1956), Chapter 6.

[24] Terminology: C = fixed capital; V = variable capital; S = the rate of surplus value. Total production Y = C + V + S. Let the organic composition of capital (C/V) be designated as q; let the rate of surplus value (S/V) be designated as s; and let the rate of profit (S/(C + V)) be designated as p. By dividing each term in the rate of profit by V, it can be easily established that: p(q + 1) = s. Setting q′ = (q + 1) and assuming that p declines, and that q′ and s rise, we can easily determine that this requires $\hat{q}' > \hat{s}$, where the bar indicates a rate of change.

We can gain a better view of what is happening to technology by realizing that V = Lw, where L = labour and w = wage, so q = C/Lw and s = ((Y-Lw-C)/Lw) = ((Y/Lw) − q′)). If w remains constant and if the macroeconomic variables designated above act as Marx predicted, we can easily derive $(\overline{C}/\overline{L}) > .5\,(\overline{Y}/\overline{L})$. Although technical change can be easily introduced into this system, two problems arise. First, the results differ in the manner in which we model such change. Second, we must determine whether to measure q in constant or fixed prices. (For instance, if technological change is capital augmenting, then the C/L ratio must increase at least as fast as the rate of technical change if q is measured in fixed prices and is to rise). The problem can be further compounded by letting the wage rate increase (which reflects the growing needs generated by the growing per capita income). Although a wide variety of cases can be examined, I can find no special implications of constant, increasing or decreasing rate of technological change which implies that Marx and Engels favoured one over the others.

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well-known feature of full communism would lead to the abolition of social classes, for Marx and Engels conceptualized classes primarily in reference to the ownership of the means of production; and ownership was viewed primarily as the legal right to receive profits. The "class struggle" thus ends in a formal sense when society as a whole takes over the private ownership of capital. I have been unable to find any passage in their writings where they squarely face the problem that "property rights" include not only ownership but control, that control may not accompany ownership, that such control rights are extremely complex, and that centralization of decision-making in full communism has some very important social and economic consequences. A political addendum is also worthwhile to note: if various people in full communism have quite different access to control over the means of production, groups might coalesce around such control rights in a manner parallel to the coalesence of groups around ownership rights in capitalism.

b) **No market.** One can infer that neither saw the market as a key allocation mechanism and placed their hopes on some type of national economic planning. Quite early in their writings they analyzed a number of problems inherent in the competitive market mechanism. For instance, in an early collaborative effort they argued: "Competition separates individuals from one another, not only the bourgeoisie, but still more the workers."[25] Engels noted[26] that free competition leads to disproportions between production and consumption, trade cycles, and wastes because of middlemen. At this time they discussed in a vague fashion some type of planning mechanism replacing the market. For instance, Engels foresaw a social plan guiding production and "association" replacing competition.[27] Or jointly they wrote ". . . with the communist regulation of production, . . . the power of the relation of supply and demand is dissolved into nothing and men once more can control exchange, production, and the way they behave to one another."[28] The idea which they wished to stress was that humankind is the only animal which can consciously plan ahead and that the replacement of the anarchy of the market with conscious planning of the entire economy was a realization of our species-being. Throughout the rest of their lives, they appeared to deal with the subject in the same manner, although other passages include discussion of such features as the shortening of the labour day, the abolition of money, direct transfer of goods between producers, and the withering of the state with the elimination of market relations.[29] However, they never specified in detail

[25] *The German Ideology*, (1845–47; MECW Vol. 5, p. 75).
[26] "Bielefeld Address," (1845; MECW Vol. 4, p. 241).
[27] "Principles of Communism," (1847; MECW 1875, p. 348).
[28] *The German Ideology*, (1845–47; MECW Vol. 5, p. 48).
[29] Some selected quotations might give more of the flavour of their later discussion. For instance, Marx wrote (*Das Kapital*, Vol. II, Chapter 18; MEW, Vol. 24, p. 828) " . . . money capital is eliminated. Society distributes labour power and means of production to the different branches of production. The producer may, for all it matters, receive paper vouchers entitling them to withdraw from the social supplies of consumer goods a quantity corresponding to their labour time. These vouchers are not money. They do not circulate." In Volume III of *Das Kapital* Marx argued (Chapter 10; MEW Vol. 25,

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the nature of the planning or distributional processes and they seemed to view the choice as only between the anarchy of production (the market) and the centralized economic planning which was found in the administration of some nineteenth-century factories. Since a market mechanism is unsuitable for resource allocation on a national level, presumably it is also unsuitable for allocation of resources between nation states (or, more exactly, the entity that would supersede the nation state). Thus full communism would feature greater centralization than capitalism because central planning would supersede the market, but also because such planning would presumably be carried out at a worldwide level.

c) **No cooperatives.** Although Marx and Engels occassionally talked of "cooperative producers" in communism, they did not refer to the presence of production cooperatives. Indeed, in several passages they explicitly denied the presence of cooperatives.[30]

d) **Labour discipline.** With regard to the work process, we find an extremely important ambiguity. Engels, who actually ran a factory, had quite strong views on how production units in full communism would run. For instance, in a well-known essay he noted that production in a communist economy requires the combined action of many people, and he added:

> But whoever mentions combined actions speaks of organization. Now is it possible to have organization without authority? . . . The automatic machinery of a big factory is much more despotic than the small capitalist who employs workers ever has been. At least with regard to the hours of work one may write on the portals of these factories "Abandon all autonomy those who enter." . . . Wanting to abolish authority in large-scale industry is tantamount to wanting to abolish industry itself, to destroy the power loom in order to

p. 197) in a parenthetical remark "It is only where production is under the actual predetermining control of society that the latter establishes a relation between the volume of social labour-time applied in producing definite articles, and the volume of the social wants to be satisfied by these articles." Later in the same volume he noted (Chapter 48; MEW Vol. 25, p. 828) "Freedom . . . can only consist in socialist man, the associated producers, rationally regulating their interchange with nature, bringing it under the combined control, instead of being ruled by it . . . the shortening of the working day is its basic prerequisite. Towards the end of his life Marx noted in "Critique of the Gotha Program," (1875; MEW Vol. 39, p. 19) "Within the cooperative society based on common ownership of the means of production, the producers do not exchange their products, just as little does the labour employed on the products appear here *as the value* of these products . . ." Engels also continued to make the same obeisances towards planning. For instance, he wrote amongst material for corrections for *Anti-Duehring*, (1891; MEW Vol. 20, p. 620) "Social production according to a previously agreed plan will become possible . . . In the degree to which the anarchy of social production disappears, will the political authority of the state disappear."

[30] Engels' views were made clear in a letter to A. Bebel (1886; MEW Vol. 36, p. 426) where he discusses the transition to communism: "Things must be so arranged that the society—chiefly the state—owns the means of production and so that the special interest of the co-operative vis-à-vis the society as a whole should not become established." Although Engels mentions at one point the "free and equal associations of producers" in *The Origin of Family, Private Property, and the State*, Chapter 9, (1884; MEW Vol. 21, p. 168) and although similar formulations can be found and are occasionally given particular political or economic interpretations, he does not define these terms and they should best be considered as rhetorical flourishes. I have been unable to find any indication that Marx felt differently about such matters. Indeed, the logic of his argument that some type of central planning would supplant the market would give any putative producer cooperative a relatively small realm of autonomy.

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> return to the spinning wheel . . . We have seen that, on the one hand, a certain authority, no matter how delegated, and, on the other hand, a certain subordination are things which are imposed on us independently of all social organization and are part of the material conditions under which we produce and make products circulate.[31]

A reasonable argument can be made that Marx was in accord with these ideas.[32]

e) **Public expenditures.** Other assumptions about the communist economic system can be dealt with more quickly. With regard to public expenditures some of Marx and Engels' discussion of the withering away of the state has relevance. For instance, they noted that in communism the public expenditures for police, armed forces, and social expenditures for the poor would be eliminated. Since there are no wages, it would not be necessary to finance private consumption from the government budget; however, given the nature of the plan it seems likely that funds (or resources) for investment would flow through the government budget.

One governmental function which would receive greater expenditures (or, after money has been eliminated, resources) is education. A very high level of education is important not only to develop the skills to operate an advanced economy but also to develop the social consciousness necessary for members of the society to be able to make various consumption and other personal decisions by taking the needs of the society as a whole into account. For instance, even in such intimate matters as the size of the family, the needs of society would predominate in the decisions of couples so that there would not be overpopulation.[33] Or with regard to production, "labour has become not only a livelihood but life's prime want,"[34] so that work can be carried out without incentives. Given the higher level of social consciousness achieved through education, they also foresaw more rational work habits in the

[31] "On Authority," (1872; MEW Vol. 18, p. 306).

[32] This short essay "On Authority" was written by Engels as a response to a request by Enrico Bignami; it was finished in October 1872 and was published in December 1873 for *Almanacco Repubblicano, 1874*. Since Engels had moved from Manchester to London in September 1870, he had a great deal more opportunity for face-to-face contact with Marx, both with regard to intellectual matters and to the running of the Workers' International. In 1872 Marx was in full possession of his intellectual powers and was engaged in a power struggle with Bakunin for control of the International (which led to the strategic transfer of the seat of the Council of the International to America). Since the Italian branch of the International was weak and since the struggle within the International was very important to Marx, it seems inconceivable that Engels did not discuss the essay with Marx and that Marx did not approve it before it was sent to Bignami. A review of correspondence of Marx and Engels (MEW) did not turn up any reference to the article, so the issue cannot be definitely resolved. However, the view that Engels' ideas expressed in this essay diverge from those of Marx seems very hard to sustain. The thrust of this essay certainly seems in line with Marx's polemic against Bakunin and, indeed, it also seems to address the problem of anarchy occurring in Italy at that time. Some might believe that the intellectual thrust of this essay differs from Marx's more general views about the development of humankind. The biography evidence offered above seems more solid than any interpretation of Marx's views of human development which I have seen.

[33] Engels' letter to K. Kautsky, (1881; MEW Vol. 35, p. 151).

[34] "Critique of the Gotha Program," (1875; MEW Vol. 19, p. 21).

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factories because, as Marx argued, production would not be carried out in a manner which would waste raw materials because those working on their own account do not waste materials.[35]

f) **No complete equality.** As noted above, in full communism each receives according to his needs; and if people's needs are different (e.g. X is sick, Y is well), they would receive different amounts of goods. It is possible that similar people might have different needs, or that if their needs are the same, their wants may be different. Engels has a clear statement of this matter when he noted "There will always exist a *certain* inequality in the condition of life which it may be possible to reduce to a minimum, but can never be entirely removed. Alpine dwellers will always have different conditions of life from those of people living on the plains. The idea of socialist [from the context, the second stage of socialism, i.e. communism, is meant] society as the realm of equality is a one sided French idea . . ."[36]

g) **No politics.** Political relations of relevance to the economy, except for the withering away of the state, are less discussed. It should be noted that the governance of the communist economy is also quite unclear; however, some idea of what would not be in place can be gleaned from Marx's comments that "legislature, magistracy, and armed forces are all the offspring of improper conditions of society, preventing those arrangements among men which would make useless the compulsory intervention of a third supreme power."[37] Marx viewed favourably the type of direct democracy which he claimed occurred in the Paris commune of 1871.[38] It should be emphasized that although they both saw the elimination of the coercive nature of the state, neither saw the abolition of a central government (e.g. planning must be centralized) or its various functions. For instance, according to Engels: "The first act—. . . the taking possession of the means of production in the name of society—this is, at the same time, its last independent act as a state. State interference in social relations becomes, in one domain after another, superfluous, and then withers away of itself; the government of persons is replaced by the administration of things, and by the conduct of processes of production."[39] Such technocratic ideas, which were shared by Marx, did not seem to be further developed by either.

In brief, Marx and Engels viewed the communist system as built on a high level of technology, where there would be no private ownership of the means of production, where the economy would be centrally planned on a worldwide basis, and where production would be carried out in very large establishments. The skills required for any type of job would be relatively simple to learn and the labour force would become homogeneous; it is likely that the needs and wants would be similar as well for workers possessing roughly the same skills. Goods and services

[35] *Das Kapital*, Vol. III, Chapter 5; (MEW Vol. 25, p. 93).
[36] Letter to A. Bebel, March 18–25, (1875; MEW Vol. 34, p. 129).
[37] "The Indian Question," (1853; MECW Vol. 12, p. 159).
[38] Remarks contained in his pamphlet "Civil War in France," 1871.
[39] *Anti-Duehring*, (1878; MEW Vol. 20, p. 262).

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are distributed in some non-market manner which does not involve the use of money.

THE KEY to full communism, as to many other utopias, is the super-abundance of goods and services. This can be achieved either by a very high capital/labour ratio so that labour productivity would be extremely high, or a very high level of technology which would produce the same effect, or a faster growth of consumption needs or wants so that goods and services would become relatively abundant. Each of these alternatives is examined in turn.

1. High Capital/Labour Ratio: As noted above, Marx and Engels stressed the increasing mechanization (i.e. rising capital/labour ratio) of the economy. As far as I can tell, neither rested the general abundance of goods upon this factor alone.

2. High Level of Technology: As noted above, Marx and Engels appear cautious on the topic and, in contrast to some of their followers, they do not seem to lay great emphasis in their description of pure communism on extremely high levels of technology. It is, of course, easy to resolve this question in a hortatory fashion, either by appeals to the glorious future of science and to the dramatic decrease in information costs so that complex futures can be centrally planned in an efficient fashion or else by appeals to a dismal future dominated by diminishing returns or little new technology. More reasonably, we should admit that the problem is unresolved and move on.

3. High Human Potential: By high human potential, I mean that people will consciously limit their consumption so that it will be equal to or less than production. To analyze this, it is necessary to focus upon several issues.

Physical and Mental Abilities: As noted above, Marx and Engels saw man as a being in constant becoming, which would begin to realize its true potential under communism; however, they primarily discussed this problem in abstract terms. Later Marxists have brought down the analysis to a more concrete level; for instance, in a lyrical passage Leon Trotsky wrote that in full communism: "Man will become immeasurably stronger, wiser, and subtler; his body will become more harmonized, his movements more rhythmic, his voice more musical. The forms of life will become dynamically dramatic. The average human type will rise to the heights of an Aristotle, a Goethe, or a Marx. And above this ridge new peaks will rise."[40] Among other things individuals will perceive how their own personal interests coincide with the interests of society as a whole (see quotation in footnote[8]). Such a viewpoint seems to be a common thread running through many Marxist analyses of full communism.[41]

It should be clear that if people's abilities are greatly increased, there

[40] Leon Trotsky, *Literature and Revolution*, trans. Rose Strumsky. (International Publishers, New York, 1925; orig. 1924), p. 256.

[41] This type of vision is not peculiar to Trotsky, but is a commonplace in the East European literature on communism. For instance, in the popular textbook Akademie der Wissenschaft der USSR, Politische Oekonomie Lehrbuch (Dietz, Berlin, 1955), p. 629, we read: "All members of society would be

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need not be a homogenization of jobs for a single person to alternate between several quite different types of jobs, i.e. there will be a homogenization of people's skills, not of the skill requirements of particular jobs.

Social Participation: On a quite different level, this increase in human consciousness means that individual participation in the affairs of society will increase. Again, Trotsky analysed this problem at a more concrete level than Marx and Engels when he wrote: "All forms of life, such as the cultivation of land, the planning of human habitations, the building of theatres, the methods of socially educating children, the solution of scientific problems, the creation of new styles, will vitally engross all and everybody."[42] Although most would agree that education increases the ability of people to deal with their natural and social environment, the increase which Marxists have posited must, of course, be taken on faith, for I see no manner in which this assumption can be tested.

Changes in Human Needs: If technology and human abilities are limited, then the problem of the limits of human needs and wants becomes important, especially if we wish to distribute according to need. Before discussing these matters, it is important to draw several distinctions.

I define *desires* as our unconstrained wishes, which are infinite. I define *wants* as our desires which are constrained, for example, given my income and the various prices of particular goods and services (or given the amount of ration stamps I have in my possession) I want goods X and Y. In a market economy we can tell whether wants are being fulfilled by examining how the market functions: the presence of shortages and queues suggests they are not. Under this definition wants are not infinite unless income, of course, is infinite. Both wants and desires arise from within the individual, but both are moulded by outside social forces including such ephemeral factors as the whims of fashion. From this definition of wants, it should be clear that if the ratio of consumption to income remains constant, wants rise at the same rate as real income. *Needs* are, in some sense, more fundamental than wants. However, they also represent a social or political judgement of what is fundamental for life. Marx stressed that needs are socially conditioned and change over time.[43] Determining whether needs are being met is more difficult than a

culturally elevated and all-round educated people." Thus people would know that they should not consume too much of any particular good and service; and that each should have a spell at the unpleasant jobs in society. According to another Marxist textbook (Kuusenen, *Fundamentals of Marxism–Leninism*) n.d. (Foreign Language Publications House, p. 860): "The fulfilment by each person of his duty to work according to his ability is ensured under communism . . . Under communism, all members will work prompted solely by moral stimuli, a high sense of consciousness. In other words, this would be labour without payment, and the satisfaction without payment of all the needs of the worker."

[42] Leon Trotsky, op. cit. p. 185.

[43] This is particularly discussed by Marx when he analyzes the exchange value of labour-power which, he argued, reflected only the costs of the subsistence "needs" of the worker. In a well-known passage, *Das Kapital*, Vol. 1, (1867; MEW Vol. 18, p. 185) Marx writes: "The number and extent of [humankind's] so-called necessary wants, as also the modes of satisfying them, are themselves the product of historical development, and depend therefore to a great extent on the degree of civilization of a country . . . There enters into the determination of the value of labour-power a historical and moral element."

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similar analysis of wants, for we need not only detailed information about consumption behaviour but also some objective standard of the "proper" consumption pattern.

Although for many purposes the distinction between needs and wants is unimportant, in this context I believe that it is important. Therefore, we must determine how needs might be changing. The only empirical study I have located on the matter[44] is based on the simple idea of examining different contemporary evaluations of the dollar amount of expenditures defining the "poverty level" for the United States for various localities from 1906 to 1960. According to these data from 46 such studies, the recognized "poverty level" has risen at roughly the same rate as per capita disposable income in the same period. This means that needs increase at the same rate as income. In the literature on full communism I have found no argument that needs in such an economic system would behave any differently than in the United States in the first half of the twentieth century, nor would such an argument be very plausible if made. Of course, such an argument does have the advantage of changing the problem of fulfilling needs from a production question to a question either concerning the distribution of consumption or concerning the social education which shapes the needs, or both.

If needs rise at the same rate as per capita production and if total production in the present is not enough to fulfil the needs of all, then certain obvious problems arise in distribution according to need in the future. If currently total production is more than enough to fulfil the needs of all, then we face several problems: how do we distribute the production over our needs to begin to fulfil our wants? What if our wants diverge from our needs? The problem of distribution of goods to fill our wants can be stated more technically: if there is full communism (prices are zero so there is no budget constraint) wants will become co-terminous with desires and will be infinite, unless they are constrained either by some type of rationing system arranged by the central planners or by some type of developed social consciousness. To focus exclusively on needs, defined in some arbitrary and static fashion, is to avoid serious consideration of the economic problems of full communism.

The Marginal Utility Problem: As I argue below, it is easier to administer a communist economic system if the marginal utility of income declines as income increases. Marx and Engels do not address the problem directly, but the subsequent literature on pure communism does handle the problem, so we need to consider the matter briefly.

According to some economists, both in the neoclassical and Marxist camps, the allocation of goods to fulfil human wants becomes easier over the course of economic development because the marginal utility of additional consumption is declining. This type of argument is based on several considerations: first, human needs such as food, clothing, shelter, health care, sexual satisfaction, exercise and decoration of body,

[44] Oskar Ornati, *Poverty Amid Affluence*, (20th Century Fund, New York, 1966).

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enrichment of leisure, and increase of knowledge and skills are limited; and, over history, the wants associated with these needs have risen only slowly and will only slowly rise in full communism.[45] Second, much consumption takes time or the help of others so that as consumption increases and servants are no longer available, one is physically limited in the amount which can be consumed. Mandel claims: "Without the help of lackeys and servants it is not very comfortable to change one's clothes too often or even to possess too many . . . When domestic servants and even housekeepers have vanished . . . there is a limit to the number of rooms one can *wish* to have."[46] Third, with greater abundance, the motives for conspicuous consumption or competitive consumption disappear. Finally, in an economic system which is not based on the profit motive, the producers have no motive to urge greater consumption, so that wants will not be artificially stimulated.

Unfortunately, it is not at all obvious that a declining marginal utility of consumption eases the problem of fulfilling wants; further, it is also not clear that the marginal utility of consumption falls over time. Several arguments have been offered with regard to the latter argument. First, there is no empirical evidence that marginal utility of consumption falls over time; indeed, taking the fact that needs seem to increase at the same rate as income and assuming a utility function such that marginal utility is a function of the percentage difference between income and the level of basic needs, the marginal utility of consumption does not fall at all over time.[47] Second, new human wants are created when old ones are satisfied. In this regard the Soviet economist A. Rumyantsev declared that in full communism there is a non-antagonistic contradiction ". . . between the new needs being constantly evolved by social production (on the basis of the full satisfaction of the existing needs of all members of society) and the new demands which these needs make upon the social production that has engendered them."[48] Next, our wants for higher quality goods and services increase whenever the quality of existing products is improved and we begin to see the potential for further improvements. Then, since consumption takes time, more can be consumed if one consumes less of each thing, or if one consumes wastefully. Some ethical questions are involved which will be analyzed when I discuss the rationing problem.

[45] E.g. Ernest Mandel, *Marxist Economic Theory*, trans. Brian Pearce, Vol. 2 (Monthly Review Press, New York, 1968), p. 660.

[46] Ibid. p. 661.

[47] Two types of additional empirical evidence might seem relevant to this problem. According to an analysis of public opinion data in which respondents were asked to rate their happiness on a scale of 1 to 10, Richard Easterlin, "Does Economic Growth Improve the Human Lot?" in Paul David and Melvin Reder, (eds.), *Nations and Households in Economic Growth* (Academic Press, New York, 1974), pp. 89–120), concludes that happiness has not increased over time. Given some additional assumptions about this mode of enquiry, we can deduce the conclusion that utility functions have shifted in a manner so that the average and marginal utility of consumption are still the same. On the other hand, from the observation that the average work day has declined and some additional assumptions, we can conclude that the marginal utility of consumption has declined. The logical chains to derive these conclusions are so fraught with questionable assumptions that I believe nothing very interesting can be concluded from this type of empirical evidence.

[48] A. Rumyantsev, *Categories and Laws of the Political Economy of Communism* (Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1969), p. 152.

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Finally, some goods are inherently scarce, either because they cannot be increased (e.g. vintage wines, Vermeer paintings, and flags from the Paris Commune) or because they reflect one's position[49] and such positions are limited.

High Incentives for Work: If technology is not infinite, then it is necessary for people to work in order to produce goods and services in full communism. Although Marx and Engels did not address the question concretely of how the various jobs would be fulfilled, the discussion in the later Marxist literature on the subject is illuminating. In the discussion below I use the term "work" to describe an activity which might or might not be unpleasant or uncreative.

It is often argued that in full communism the work day would be much shorter, not only because the level of technology is higher but because the large number of unnecessary jobs in a capitalist economy would be abolished. One frequently comes across the statement that four hours a day would be all that were necessary, at least in the foreseeable future. (Marx's son-in-law, Paul Lafargue,[50] provides a witty analysis of the problem and foresees the necessity for only three hours a day). This, in turn, raises problems about who will do the work, and a serious incentive question arises in situations where wages are zero because goods are distributed free. This question is also related to the problem of social consciousness and the fulfilling of human wants. Part of the answer to the incentive question depends on the nature of technology and the types of jobs which will be required of the members of the communist society. Certainly, technology has eliminated many of the physically arduous jobs in the society and this trend will undoubtedly continue in the future. However, can all jobs demanding considerable (and unpleasant) physical exertion be eliminated? Similarly, technology has eliminated many of the boring, repetitive, and dirty jobs in society, but to what extent will this trend continue so that fulfilling such remaining jobs is not a problem? Further, as noted above, Engels argued that large scale production requires subordination. Although various types of co-operative decision-making structures can be instituted, to what extent can long-term relations in the work place be so completely restructured that the residues of subordination will be acceptable to all workers?

If all unpleasant jobs can be eliminated so that the only jobs left are those allowing extremely creative work, then there should be no problem in inducing people to work. As noted above, Marx believed that work is a necessity for a person to realize his human potential. In full communism, as the Soviet economist Kostin[51] has asserted: "Work will offer joy and satisfaction" and the holders of such jobs will develop into better individuals and will fulfil their need to increase their knowledge and improve their skills. However, if technology does not develop in such a

[49] Fred Hirsch, *The Social Limits to Growth*, (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass. 1976).

[50] Paul Lafargue, *The Right to be Lazy*, (Kerr, Chicago, 1909; orig. 1883).

[51] N. P. Kostin, "Free Time Under Communism," *Voprosy Filosofii*, No. 5, 1960, trans. in *The Soviet Review*, Vol. 1, No. 4 (Nov. 1960), pp. 28–35.

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manner to make all jobs creative and if there are certain essential jobs which are physically arduous, boring, and dirty, how will they be filled?

To summarize: Problems of setting up a communist economy with the free distribution of all goods and services do not appear insurmountable if we can assume that there is an extremely high capital/labour ratio or if the level of technology is extremely high. If these assumptions are not met, such an economy can be easily established if humans within the society are willing to work and are easily able to limit their consumption so that total consumption demands are less than, or equal to, total production. In short, given the right assumptions, anything is possible. But what if these assumptions are not met so that there is no superabundance? If a person is to gamble all on the attainment of a utopia, it is useful to consider what might happen if certain basic assumptions are not met.

THERE are three major problems concerning the feasibility of full communism. The first of these is that if no external or internal consumption constraints are placed upon a person living where such goods and services are free, and if personal consumption desires are unlimited, then the demand for goods and services will exceed their production unless production is unlimited. A *rationing* problem arises in establishing constraints so that consumption demands and production are brought into alignment. Particularly difficult rationing problems arise with respect to goods and services for which the quality is important: there may be enough apartments to satisfy all, but there can be only a limited number of apartments in any particular location. Nice beaches can be constructed, but nice beaches with privacy may be much more limited. As noted above, goods produced in the past are also limited. Other rationing difficulties arise because some people might be, by nature, packrats (i.e. "collectors") who would never be satisfied with a given quantity of a particular good, but would constantly demand more. Finally, it is possible that some people might be simply difficult and would demand more than any system could supply, merely to show that the system wouldn't work. The rationing problem is *not* whether governments can give away certain goods and services without difficulty, for we know that this is possible.[52] The problem is the determination of internal and external constraints that do not rely either on prices (ruled out by assumption) or on direct coercion.

The second problem is that if all goods and services are free to consumers, what mechanisms would ensure that the necessary factors of production (especially labour) would be available to produce them? This is the *incentive* problem, where the term incentive is used in its broadest meaning and not limited to material incentives such as money. The

[52] It is interesting to note in this regard that the governments in the capitalist, market economies of Western Europe distribute without charge for purposes of education, health and welfare a larger share of their GDP than the socialist, centrally administered economies of Eastern Europe. Comparable data are available in Frederic L. Pryor, "Interpretations of Public Expenditure Trends in East and West," in Gustav Ranis, et al. (eds.), *Comparative Development Perspectives*, (Westview Press, Boulder, Colorado, 1984).

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problem becomes acute if some jobs are physically arduous, boring, dirty, or unpleasant in other ways so that they are unfulfilling, even when people would work at them only in short intervals. Of course, naked coercion is one solution and, indeed, at least one Soviet economist, N. P. Kostin,[53] has argued that in full communism labour would be allocated where it was needed: "In doing so, each worker's abilities and desires will be taken into account, of course, but we must not forget that under communism each worker will value the public interest above all, even when the latter may not coincide with his own desires." That is, the citizen's need to work is fulfilled, even when his wants regarding particular jobs are not. However, this is not part of the standard Marxist canon on the subject and we must examine other possible solutions.

Thirdly, if technology is limited and if it is desirable to have a high level of per capita consumption, what mechanisms would ensure that goods and services would be produced at such a level? At this point it is important to recognize the *allocation* problem, which is how the production factors would be allocated and the technologies chosen so that goods and services would be produced in a relatively efficient fashion and wastage would be avoided.

In brief, a communist economic system without a superabundance of goods faces a feasibility problem. Although Marx and Engels did not deal directly with this, the problem has received considerable attention from Marxists following them. I shall sketch briefly the nature of this subsequent discussion.

SEVERAL solutions have been offered to the rationing and incentive problems which deserve our attention. The first of these is the "minimal importance" approach. According to this line of argument, although rationing and incentive problems arise, they are relatively unimportant. This can be seen in several different ways.

With regard to distribution, the following goods and services can be easily distributed free of charge: those with very low income and price elasticities of demand (e.g. salt); those which are very homogeneous and do not have quality variations; and those which are difficult to use as substitutes for other goods and services distributed by some type of rationing mechanism. Some such goods and services are now distributed free of charge by most governments; as productivity increases, more will be distributed in this manner. Sherman[54] argues that such goods and services could account for 80 per cent of total production in the future; Wiles[55] retorts that Sherman's view is based on a very static conception of human wants and, further, that the demand of high income people for housing and othe non-homogeneous goods and services is well over 20

[53] N. P. Kostin, op. cit.

[54] Howard J. Sherman, "The Economics of Pure Communism," *Soviet Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 1, (July 1970), pp. 24–37.

[55] Peter Wiles, "A Reply but not a Rejoinder," *Soviet Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 1 (July 1970), pp. 37–44.

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per cent. Indeed, when going through a list of goods and services which are components of the GDP, one finds relatively few which meet all three criteria except those already distributed through the government sector. Moreover, as the level of development increases, it seems likely that the non-homogeneity of goods and services would become more important. Further, there is the problem of allocating homogeneous goods which are new and which are not yet produced in sufficient quantity for all, as noted in the quotation by the Soviet economist Rumyantsev cited above. The faster production increases, the higher the percentage of new goods for which such rationing problems might exist.

It is much more difficult to attempt the same exercise with the various jobs which must be filled in order to see how the incentive problem would be solved. Some people like boring or arduous work if they feel that they are participating usefully in society; some feel a certain personal fulfilment in work of any type. Others are willing to work if they can consume certain goods or services which ordinarily would not be available to them. Still others would be willing to work at unpleasant jobs provided that they were temporary and short-lived (thus fulfilling what Fourier called the "butterfly" complex). However, this implies that jobs are relatively homogeneous and can be filled by many people. As noted above, technological change by its nature brings about the demand for new skills so that the labour force must be inherently heterogeneous. This "unimportance argument" is unconvincing and seems to represent little more than whistling in the dark to keep away ghosts.

The second solution is that of the "rational and socially conscious consumer worker." Although human abilities may not rise to the level described in the Trotsky quotation above, most people can be educated in a manner to provide them with a sufficient social consciousness to make the economy work, i.e. to substitute internal constraints for such external constraints as prices. This argument is based on three key premises: first, it assumes that each member of society has a broad and thorough oversight of the entire economy. Second, it assumes that with this information people will be able to ascertain the social interest. Third, it assumes that individuals will be willing to adapt their own behaviour to accord with these perceived social interests. In the economy of an isolated, pre-industrial village it is relatively simple to gain an oversight of the entire economy, for the number of goods and services produced is small, the technologies employed are simple (and the alternative technologies limited), and, given the low level of income, the economic wants of the population can be relatively easily determined. However, complexity of the production process increases with a rising technological level, an enlarged scale of the production unit, and a broader geographic area over which production and trade take place. Further, in contrast to the arguments about increasing homogenization, it seems more likely that as we move further from the level of bare subsistence, economic wants become increasingly differentiated and subtle and, as a result, more complex as well.

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As production and consumption complexity increases, it becomes increasingly difficult for any person to gain an overview of the economy in order to determine social needs. Such an overview requires the processing of an enormous amount of information and even with the advent of large scale computers to aid such information processing, the magnitude and difficulty of the task probably increases as the level of economic development rises. It might be added that in those countries of Eastern Europe and Asia which have attempted to administer their economies centrally, up to now the economic planners have been unable to gain a sufficient overview to prevent considerable shortages on the consumption side and inefficiencies on the production side. Therefore, how is a single citizen to know whether he should take the personal computer which he sees in the store and would like to have or whether he should leave it for others because it is in short supply elsewhere? Even if such an overview is possible, how can any one person determine the social interest? The ethics of consumption or working are tricky: if it is ascertained that more people desire consumer good X than that good is currently available, does this mean that a particular individual consumer should not try to obtain it? Or suppose an unclaimed private helicopter is available; should a particular individual take it, even though he might use it only once a year? Or with time extremely precious, should he choose the easy option of picking up a new shirt at a shop or the more time consuming option of having the shirt cleaned and pressed at home or in a shop (more abstractly, with a certain abundance and zero prices how does a socially conscious individual know whether an hour of his time is more precious to society than a new shirt?) On the production side, if job Y is unfilled, does this mean that a particular worker should fill it, especially if resources are required for training for this job and moving to the workplace which is open and the particular worker doesn't like this type of work? Moreover, even people of good will can have serious differences as to where the social interests lie in a particular situation, a phenomenon which further complicates the problem. Finally, if the social interest is known—if the individual knows that he should do X and not Y—why should he follow the social interest, especially if it brings less utility than others in the society are experiencing and if doing Y and not X provides more personal utility? Even with a high social consciousness, problems arise. This is, of course, one version of the "free rider problem" which suggests that even with the highest education, there are limits to love and selflessness. Since this has been discussed elsewhere at length,[56] the point does not need to be belaboured.

A third solution to the rationing and incentive problem is that disruptive tendencies can be curbed through the application of social pressure, i.e. external constraints of a social nature are applied to limit consumption or allocate labour. According to Kuusenin "'Society will be able to give people with an inordinate appetite a double portion.'

[56] E.g. Mancur Olson, Jr., *The Logic of Collective Action*, (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1965).

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Engels wrote, but in communist society this will only place such people in a ridiculous light before public opinion. After this, hardly anyone would want to repeat such an experiment." The famous Soviet economist S. Strumlin[57] emphasized the importance of such social pressure being applied within small groups when he noted: "The role of public opinion is enormous even now. Public acclaim or condemnation, censure and ostracism will carry far more weight in the future commune in which everyone will know everyone else, in which all will be friends and compete in community and in amateur art activities.[58]

A good deal of analysis by Marxists has, therefore, focused on the ways in which social opinion can be mobilized. In the period around the 21st and 22nd Party Congresses of the CPSU Khrushchev was talking about accelerating the withering away of the state by delegating certain functions of the state to the labour unions and other social groups (e.g. law and order duties to comrade courts, people's militias, and, later, to anti-parasite assemblies); however, these various groups had certain coercive powers (e.g. the right to levy fines and designate other punishments) and some serious questions can be raised about delegating coercive powers to certain groups over which little or no control can be exercised by the society at large. It might also be argued that in exercising such coercive powers, these groups become in essence arms of the state so that such an approach does not answer the problem posed about the withering away of the state.

Reading Soviet discussion about full communism, there appears to be inordinate attention given to the question of architecture, i.e. how the living arrangements would be set up to achieve such social pressure. There are a number of proposals for small communities of a thousand or so, with the communal sharing of recreational and eating facilities.[59] Given the economies of scale of production, it is clear that these consumption units cannot be simultaneously self-contained productive

[57] S. Strumilin, "Family and Community in the Society of the Future," *Novy Mir*, No. 7, 1960, trans. in *The Soviet Review*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (Feb. 1961), pp. 3–30.

[58] Ibid. p. 26.

[59] A superb example of this attention to architecture is provided in the article by Strumilin (n. 56), the doyen of Soviet economics, who sketched the communist future as based on a series of palace communes, each with 2000 or 2500 residents (slightly less than half the population of Plato's utopia): "In each of the palace communes with a floor space of up to 40,000 square metres, all of the service facilities can be located on the ground floor—the service bureau, medical offices, post office, barber's shop, laundry, etc., while the remaining floors could be occupied by the members of the commune. One wing of the second floor, let us say, could be used for the children's apartments, the other wing could be tenanted by the aged in need of special care and by service personnel. The third floor could consist of two to three room flats for married people; and the fourth floor could be made up of separate rooms for working youth, students and single people in general. According to present calculations every person can be provided with 16 to 18 square metres of living space within 20 years, and this is exclusive of floor space needed for the public dining rooms, reading rooms and other premises (for instance, the children's play room, and the rooms for musical, choral and other amateur art activities or sports). From 8,000 to 10,000 square metres of floor space may be made available for these purposes on every floor." Such palace communes would surround the central plant employing all the members. Combined communes would form micro-districts in the big cities and the various buildings would be linked by underground passages so that children could walk safely to school and in any type of weather. It must be emphasized that Strumilin's article leaves no doubt that the problem of social control is uppermost in his thoughts in developing these ideas.

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units; however, there is considerably less discussion about labour communes. The communalism and decentralization implied by such living arrangements certainly does not seem to correspond very closely to the collectivism implied by Marx and Engels. However, in certain respects this discussion seems more realistic, for it indicates a frank recognition of the fact that such arrangements would be necessary for social pressure to be exercised on unenlightened individuals. Unfortunately, I could find no discussion on how recalcitrant communes would be brought into line, a situation where group egotism supplants individual egotism.

Another institution to mobilize public pressure is, of course, the Communist Party, but will the Party exist in full communism? Marx and Engels do not discuss the matter; and the East European literature on the matter is complex and vague.[60] In the Soviet Union there seems to be a consensus that the Party will be around in the early stages of communism, although various authors differ as to its role, i.e. whether the role will be exclusively educative and moral, or whether the Party will act as a coordinator of the economy and polity. There is a certain disagreement about whether the Party will be necessary for the later stages of communism. Although it is certainly possible that social pressure in full communism can be focused so as to keep certain individuals in line, one wonders how such group work will be coordinated. Further, it implies that the groups exercising such pressures have the correct view of social needs, a problem discussed above when considering the dilemmas of the socially conscious individual.

A final potential solution is through "neutral administration" or technocracy. If goods and services are scarce, if wants exceed production, if the education of consumers and workers is not sufficient to solve the rationing and incentive problems, and if also public opinion cannot be sufficiently mobilized to solve these problems, then administrative methods must be employed. That is, external pressures emanating from the central government are employed and we have an important force leading to centralization of the economy. This is a commonplace observation: for instance, according to one Soviet observer, Shakhnazarov, ". . . it would be impossible to conceive of a communist society, even after the state has withered away, continuing to exist without organized and rationally centralized planning of the national economy, distribution of resources and labour power among its branches, guidance in science and other cultural spheres. In fact, under communism the demands of society for such organization will be much greater."[61] Unfortunately, I have found no detailed discussion on how the future communist society would be administered. We are assured, however, that planning would become more inclusive, that every minute would be

[60] The Soviet literature on the role of the Party in full communism is contained in Farr (op. cit. n. 2), pp. 72ff. and Gilison (op. cit. n. 2), pp..147ff.

[61] Georgi Shakhnazarov, "When the State Has Withered Away," *Politicheskoye Samoobrazovaniye*, No. 8, 1960, trans. in *The Soviet Review*, Vol. 1, No. 4 (Nov. 1960), pp. 54–68.

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calculated, and that all would function smoothly. Marxist writers assure us that the administrators would not act as bureaucrats do in capitalist nations but rather in a rational fashion and in the interests of the entire society. Conflicts will wither away with the withering of the state and these allocative functions would lose their political character. This is what Engels meant by the "administration of things" supplanting the state administering over people.

An important and obvious objection can be raised to this approach. Surely property rights have a social meaning, in that the control over an object implies a social relationship with other people. That is, my control over good A means that I can prevent you from using it. In turn, this means that the administration of things is merely a disguised form of the government over people, which implies the use of coercive force in a disguised form. The citation above of N. P. Kostin in which he noted that the job of a worker may not correspond to that worker's desires is a good example of what I mean. A more extensive analysis of this problem of hidden coercion in communist society must be left to others.[62] To put the matter in a broader perspective, we need to employ Marx's concept of fetishism. In the first chapter of *Das Kapital* Marx declared bourgeois economists guilty of the fetishism of commodities, i.e. focusing their attention on prices and quantities, rather than the social relationships of exploitation underlying the production of goods.[63] The concept of the "administration of things" is a superb example of what should be called the fetishism of planning, where attention is focused on the mechanics of planning, rather than the social relationships underlying the planning process whereby one group of people determine production and consumption of goods and services by others, a process which involves important elements of hidden coercion if the plans are to be carried out. The fetishism of planning means that property rights are viewed only in terms of ownership rights (those rights permitting a profit to be gained) rather than also in terms of control rights.

Of course, it is possible that planning is in some sense participative, a matter discussed in greater detail below. But with every increase in complexity of the economy, which I have discussed above, participative planning becomes more difficult and, it might be added, the results become more removed from each individual in the process.

ANOTHER problem facing the feasibility of full communism is that involving efficiency, in production as well as consumption. As far as the former is concerned, if technology develops in such a manner that each good or service can only be produced with one process, (fixed proportions of raw materials and factors of production), then planning an efficient allocation of resources is no problem once these proportions are

[62] E.g. Jeremy R. Azrael, "Is Coercion Withering Away?" *Problems of Communism*, Vol. 11, No. 6 (Nov. 1962), pp. 9–17, and Herbert Ritvo, "Totalitarianism without Coercion," *Problems of Communism*, Vol. 9, No. 6 (Nov. 1960), pp. 19–30.

[63] MEW Vol. 18, pp. 85ff.

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known. Further, if the level of production is so high that a general surplus of goods could be produced, then the efficiency problem is not important. However, if the economy does not produce a surplus of goods, if technology is such that capital, labour, and raw materials can be combined in various proportions to produce a given good or service, and if the most efficient combination for producing any particular good depends upon the overall factor proportions in the economy, then an efficiency problem arises. I consider only this latter case and touch briefly on the three basic methods which have been proposed to achieve efficiency.

Firstly, many neoclassical economists have proposed that productive efficiency be achieved by use of a market mechanism and perfect competition, modified by appropriate taxes or subsidies in case of externalities. This solution is ruled out by the basic assumptions concerning the communist economy which are discussed above.

Secondly, many Soviet economists have proposed achieving such efficiency through perfect computation, i.e. the creation of an optimal plan by the central planning agency which would involve solving a programming problem embracing all goods and services produced in the economy at all localities and taking into account all possible technologies. Solution of a programming problem with several million goods and services and with ten possible technologies for each, requires computational facilities which are not yet on the horizon and, furthermore, implies that resource costs of obtaining the requisite information are very much lower than now. In sum, such a solution seems infeasible, at least with current or foreseeable technology.

A final method, which has been discussed in the mathematical economics literature, involves a structured dialogue between the centre and the various production units, and several types have been proposed. For instance, the centre can send down a set of tentative prices, the productive units can respond with a counter-plan of quantities of goods produced (and inputs required), and the process can be repeated until an optimal plan is achieved. The Lange model[64] and other models, discussed by Ward[64] are examples of such a dialogue. Other types of proposed dialogues involve the centre transmitting a set of quantity plans and the productive units sending up cost and price data (e.g. the models proposed by Kornai and Liptak[66] or Weitzman[67]). More complicated dialogues have been proposed which involve an intermediate administrative level so that units on each level of the economy, and at the bottom, solve

[64] Oskar Lange and Fred M. Taylor, *On the Economic Theory of Socialism*, Benjamin E. Lippincott (ed.), (University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1938).

[65] Benjamin N. Ward, *The Socialist Economy: A Study of Organizational Alternatives*, (University of California, Berkeley, 1967).

[66] Janos Kornai, *Mathematical Planning of Structural Decisions*, (North Holland Publishing Co., Amsterdam, 1967).

[67] Martin Weitzman, "Iterative Multilevel Planning with Production Targets," *Econometrica*, Vol. 38, No. 1, (Jan. 1970), pp. 50–65.

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different parts of the larger programming problems in order to achieve an optimum plan.

Although such dialogues permit a certain type of participation, each of the productive units concentrates on a very small aspect of the problem so that the participation is very much different from the general participation in the affairs of the economy which the quotation from Trotsky in the early pages of this essay suggested. It should also be emphasized that all the proposals about the type of dialogue carried out between the superior and subordinate units of the economy make some critical assumptions which can be challenged. For example, it is assumed that the resource costs of transmitting information in a timely fashion are low and that productive units and central planners play the game fairly (for example, the enterprises should not engage in strategic behaviour to hide capacity or to obtain a loose plan).

Certain doubts arise about the feasibility of carrying out such a dialogue in order to achieve an optimal plan. Unfortunately, such schemes have not really been tried out on a large enough scale to yield concrete data about information costs, lags, and incentives problems of such schemes. (Martin Cave[68] has a detailed analysis of why the Soviet Union has been unable to implement such a scheme, although it has been in the discussion stage for two decades). Given the fact that the economies of scale which are assumed to exist will lead to the existence of very large single producers of particular goods and services, the temptations for strategic behaviour on the part of managers increase; and this, in turn, increases the difficulty of obtaining an optimal plan. This discussion should not be interpreted to mean that such a communist economic system could not function. Certainly the Soviet Union, which is a large and complex centrally administered economy, has been able to function quite well, at least in a macroeconomic sense.[69] However, an economy of this sort is far from the type of communist economy envisioned by Marx and Engels and, it should be added, does not seem to provide the economic circumstances to produce the type of individuals needed to make a communist economic system function in the proper manner.

If there is a general abundance, efficiency on the consumption side could be obtained merely by producing more of those goods where the inventories fall below a pre-specified level. If there is an impending shortage, shops would merely send more orders to the manufacturers, who would then produce more goods. If there is not a general abundance and the free consumer goods must be rationed, then problems arise in trying to determine what is the mix of the goods which would correspond most to consumer wants. A physical rationing system such as that carried out in war-time in many countries might be easily administered, but it is difficult from such a system to derive information on unfilled demand. Of

[68] Martin Cave, *Computers and Economic Planning*, (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1980).
[69] Pryor, op. cit. n. 22.

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course, if reselling of goods is permitted, some measure of this unfilled demand could be obtained from the market price so that the production pattern could be changed. However, the institutional assumptions of communism appear to rule out this possibility. No description I have seen of full communism seems to address this problem.

To summarize, if the assumption underlying the discussion about a superabundance of goods is discarded, then a feasibility problem arises which is manifested in rationing, incentive, and allocation problems. I argue above that these are serious problems and require some type of internal or external constraints to be placed on consumption. Since market price information indicating scarcity is denied by assumption, internal constraints based on higher education and social consciousness or external constraints based on social pressure or governmental rationing must be imposed. However, given the difficulties analyzed above, internal constraints and social pressure would probably not serve these purposes in an adequate fashion, primarily reliance would have to be placed on rationing devices provided by a central government. Thus a central organ would not only allocate goods and services, but would also plan and administer production.

MARX and Engels saw capitalism as the most productive economic system in the history of the world up to that time. However, they argued that as capitalism developed, a number of dysfunctional elements appear which increase the gap between the potential and actual production of the economy. How would a communist economic system which has not yet achieved abundance function over time? To gain perspective, it is useful to employ Marx's basic analysis to consider several major classes of economic behaviour over time which might reflect such dysfunctional elements in any industrialized economy—capitalist or communist.

The first phenomenon occurs when an increasing share of the labour force is "unproductively" engaged.[70] In capitalism Marx and Engels saw is growth in long term unemployment (i.e. the industrial reserve army). This arises as labour is displaced in the period of the downturn of the business cycle and cannot be reabsorbed during the upturn of the cycle because of the increasing mechanization of production. Many Marxists since then have also analyzed the growth of "non-productive" labour in a narrower sense of the word, namely the various types of middlemen, market researchers, financiers, and other service trades which, according to them, are specific to the capitalist economic system and could be eliminated if the system were more rational.

In communism it is possible to foresee the growth of a different type of "non-productive" labour, namely government bureaucrats of the large centralized apparatus which would be necessary to operate such an

[70] I use the term "unproductive" in one of the senses Marx specified in Volume II of *Das Kapital*, namely not directly engaged in the production of goods. This, of course, represents a narrow view since from the perspective of the production of "use-values," bureaucrats are productive.

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economic system. Indeed, Marx himself appeared to foresee this trend when he wrote: "Book-keeping, as the control and ideal synthesis of the process, becomes the more necessary the more the process [of production] assumes a social scale and loses its purely individual character. It is therefore more necessary in capitalist production than in the scattered production of handicraft and peasant economy, more necessary in collective production than in capitalist production."[71] He adds the dubious and unsupported proviso that the costs of book-keeping drop as production becomes concentrated and the function becomes social. I see little merit in either the arguments about capitalism or those about communism. Although short-term unemployment, especially in the current period, is serious, unemployment does not appear to be rising under capitalism in the long run. Further, at the present time bureaucratization appears no more excessive in socialist than in current capitalist nations,[72] which suggests that the situation might not be greatly different in the communist economy under consideration.

The second effect of time concerns trends in the distribution of property rights. In capitalism Marx and Engels foresaw a concentration and centralization of capital, which means that productive enterprises become increasingly larger and that the ownership of the means of production becomes concentrated in fewer and fewer companies. There are indications that this prediction appears to be an accurate description of trends in current capitalist economies. Marx and Engels further argued that the distribution of income in capitalist nations would become increasingly unequal because the share of labour income in national income would fall (this is a direct implication of the rise of the rate of surplus value, i.e. the ratio of property to labour income) and a smaller proportion of the population would receive this ever-growing surplus value (because of the concentration of capital in fewer firms). This part of their theory of capitalism does not appear validated by the facts, at least up to 1980. In sum, there appears to be a certain increase in the centralization of capitalist economies without this being accompanied by a rising inequality of income or a rising rate of surplus value.

In communism the control over the means of production would probably be, as I have argued, highly concentrated in the hands of the "administrators of things." This is not only because of the increasing scale of production, but because of the need for central direction in lieu of other mechanisms to solve the rationing and allocation problems. It might be further added that as the technologies for surveillance and other means of control improve,[73] this concentration could become greater.

[71] *Das Kapital*, Vol. II; (MEW Vol. 24, p. 137).

[72] Data on this matter are analyzed in Frederic L. Pryor, "Some Costs and Benefits of Markets: An Empirical Study," *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, Vol. 91, No. 1 (Feb. 1977), pp. 81–102.

[73] In the popular press there is a general assumption that computers will act to decentralize the economy by allowing employees to work in their own homes and communicating easily with others. However, information costs also fall for large organizations and permit them to grow even larger without running into high co-ordination costs. At least in the USA there is little empirical evidence suggesting that the decentralizing impact of computers is more important than their role in facilitating larger corporate growth.

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More specifically, if Michels'[74] "iron law of oligarchy" has any validity in communist society, the government administrators would have an incentive continually to concentrate more power into their hands so that the inequality of property rights (defined in terms of control over the means of production) would become greater over time. This proposition about the increasing inequality of property rights in communism is strongly disputed by various Marxists, especially in Eastern Europe. They argue that this concentration of control will not occur since the society will be governed through "democratic centralism" so that there will be an effective deconcentration and decentralization of property. Or, in other terms, property would not be simply nationalized as one finds in Eastern Europe now, but would be "fully socialized."

"Democratic centralism" is a slippery concept[75] and can imply several different things. Originally it meant that upper levels of the Party would be elected by lower levels, that such upper levels would report periodically to the lower levels, and that the decisions of the upper levels would be compulsory for the lower levels. Such an approach denies, of course, any type of pluralistic method of decision-making; it also seems vague on other points, especially what happens after a rule is promulgated and who initiates proposals for change, especially if factionalism and criticism of promulgated rules is prohibited and obedience without question is required. In the context of the discussion on communism, however, those using the term "democratic centralism" seem to imply a type of direct participation in the administration of the state. Such a process seems quite different from the type of structured dialogue discussed above in the context of the analysis of the efficiency problem. Given the assumption that the scale of production units and also the economy increases, democratic centralism in this context seems to mean that the various issues are sent "to the masses" by the government for discussion and clarification. These meetings are structured and guided by the Party (at least when it would still exist), they result in resolutions which are sent upwards and which are obligatory or are somehow taken into account by those who finally make the decision. For the communist society democratic centralism also involves the coordination of many self-governing communities, but how this would be carried out is not specified. Of course, since more people are involved in such direct participation, the process becomes more complex and time-consuming, and, it should be added, it is likely that the process becomes less meaningful to the individual participants.

In the past democratic centralism has often proved to be a fig-leaf for the Party imposing its will on the populus under the guise of consultation, with upper bodies determining the results of the elections by lower bodies of the Party. I have not been able to find any discussions on what

[74] Robert Michels, *Political Parties: A Sociological Study of Oligarchal Tendencies of Modern Democracies*, (Free Press, Glencoe, Illinois, 1958; orig. 1915).

[75] Firuz Kazemzadah, "Democratic Centralism," in C. D. Kernig, (ed.), *Marxism, Communism and Western Society*, Vol. 2, (Herder and Herder, New York, 1972), pp. 336–340.

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mechanisms will prevent this misuse of democratic centralism in the communist future, especially in a moneyless economy where the needs for economic centralization are even stronger than they are today. In sum, I see a certain centralization and concentration of property rights, albeit in quite different forms, occurring in both capitalism and communism. But naturally the process would be more pronounced in the communist economic system.

Thirdly, Marx and Engels argued that under capitalism dynamic inefficiencies in the form of business cycles are greater at higher levels of economic development, that is, over time business cycles become increasingly severe. An important cause of such cycles are the crises arising from disproportionalities occurring when the various macro-elements of the economy get out of alignment, a process allegedly becoming more severe as the economy becomes more complex. Some later Marxists also argued that such problems increase with the monopolization of the economy. Disproportionalities can also arise in a planned economy, especially as the economy becomes more complex and there is no assurance that their fluctuations of production are any less severe than in capitalism. Indeed, if one compares fluctuations in aggregate production in Eastern and Western Europe in the 30 year period from 1950 to 1980, one finds no statistically significant differences between the two sets of nations, except that agricultural fluctuations are greater in the socialist, centrally administered economies.[76] Of course, it can be argued that the future communist economy will have a much better economic performance than current economies, but the ideal always functions better than the real.

Marx and Engels also analyzed a number of other types of problems arising in capitalism which would impede economic growth, most of which occur because of increasing wastes arising from the "anarchy of the market" and from the class struggle. But with high resource costs of information, there are also micro-economic wastes in planned economies which might impede economic growth as well. The empirical evidence of the economic performance of capitalist, market economies, and socialist, centrally administered economies in the period from 1950 to 1980 shows that growth rates have been roughly the same, other things remaining equal, and that dynamic efficiency (defined in terms of growth of total factor productivity) has actually been greater in the West. From all indications it appears that in the future economic growth will be lower than current rates for all nations at present industrialized. Assuming that the rate of technical change does not alter, it is also possible that dynamic efficiency of these nations will be lower as well, although such a prediction is more hazardous. Any grounds for believing that such dynamic inefficiencies will be greater in capitalism than in communism are very slim indeed.

[76] Data are presented in Pryor, op. cit. n. 22.

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Finally, Marx and Engels foresaw increasing alienation of workers in capitalist societies, since their product is increasingly taken away from them and their livelihood is increasingly in the hands of impersonal forces outside their control. Indeed, this increasing alienation and realization that things could be better is the basic mechanism leading to the revolution for the establishment of communism.

Peter Wiles expresses in an extreme form a counter-argument:

> The root of it [Marx's concept of alienation] is that man is only perfect when he directly enjoys his own product and controls his own environment. While any fair-minded man will agree that the worker is as much "alienated" by a central planner as by the blind operation of a market he cannot control, this is not Marxism. For that creed, with its pathetic Rousseauian belief in direct democracy and the general will, undoubtedly holds that there is a social mechanism laid up in heaven which can centralize without alienating.[77]

To rephrase this argument in the terms of this essay, the enormous scale of production and the high degree of centralization would lead to alienation which would not be as prevalent in capitalism. The positing of a higher consciousness in communism so that such alienation would not occur merely defines the question away without analysis.

TO summarize, if there is a superabundance in the future, then there are no economic problems in the future communist society. If there is not a superabundance, then Marx and Engels have sketched an economic system of the future which faces some considerable problems, both in a static and in a dynamic sense. In a static sense, the solution of rationing and incentive problems involves a centralization of decision-making and the introduction of administrative methods which run in contradiction to other essential features of their proposed economic system. In a dynamic sense there is no reason to believe that many of the dysfunctions which Marx and Engels sketched for a capitalist economy would not also occur in pure communism.

Much of the problem appears to arise in their insistence that there would be no money, that a market would not be employed, and that all goods would be free. Suppose, however, that some of these elements were modified? Just as capitalist nations have tried to overcome some of the dysfunctional elements in their economies by increased governmental expenditures, governmental control over the economy, and public ownership, it is quite possible that any future communist economy would make appropriate modifications to ensure its survival. That is, just as the current capitalist economies deviate considerably from the definition of capitalism of a century ago, so also is it possible that the future communist state will deviate considerably from its conception by Marx and Engels.

[77] Peter Wiles, *The Political Economy of Communism*, (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1962).

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Although there is by no means any necessary convergence between the two future types of economic systems, the gap between capitalism in its nineteenth-century form and communism in its form specified by Marx and Engels is certainly very much greater than any future "capitalist" and "communist" economic systems will be.

INTERNATIONAL REVIEW OF ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS

Rivista Internazionale di Scienze Economiche e Commerciali

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The Soviet Economy: Alternative Views*

Igor Birman

"I know that most men—not only those considered clever, but those who are clever and capable of understanding the most difficult scientific, mathematical or philosophical problems—can seldom discern even the simplest and most obvious truth if it obliges them to admit the falsity of conclusions they have formed, perhaps with great difficulty—conclusions of which they are proud, which they have taught to others, and on which they have built their lives."

Leo Tolstoy

EXACTLY 12 years ago, Professor Zvi Griliches of Harvard told us in Moscow that American interest in Soviet economics was minimal. A few months later I discovered this for myself. Sovietologists showed some interest: I was invited to Harvard, MIT, and various other oases of curiosity. I did not speak particularly well on these occasions. My English was then far worse than it is now. I did not know which specific issues would be of significance to the Sovietologists, to the US government, or to the public. Coming from a different culture, I did not understand the political, partisan divisions within this society, and in particular, how my "hawkish" stance would immediately make me a virtual pariah within the community.

Back in Moscow, I was convinced that outsiders were unaware of what was going on in the USSR in general, with its economy in particular. Only gradually did I realize that this notion was wrong, and I now hold certain achievements in economic Sovietology in high regard. Indeed, a lot of work has been carried out in extremely difficult circumstances. Nevertheless, step by step I have arrived at the conclusion that the picture of the Soviet economy drawn by Sovietogists is far from accurate.

I SHALL begin by summarizing the general picture of the Soviet economy, as painted by Sovietologists.

1. The USSR produces approximately 60 per cent of the American GNP, or 50 per cent per capita.
2. The standard of living in the US is three times higher than in the USSR.

* Adapted from the text of a presentation to a seminar at the Harvard Russian Research Center in March 1985. The author expresses his gratitude to the participants and to Roger Clarke, David Epstein, James Gillula, Alexander Korsunsky and Peter Wiles for criticism.

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3. 12–14 per cent of the GNP is reserved for military expenditure.
4. There are no financial problems in the USSR; marginal propensity to save is quite normal, the state budget has a permanent surplus, inflation is controlled, etc.
5. Apart from grain and advanced technology, the USSR benefits little from foreign trade; in particular, its balance of payments is negative; it does not depend on other countries, and what is bought abroad is only a fraction of the national product.
6. The productivity of the economy is declining—its growth became negative around 1970. But in spite of difficulties, it will somehow "muddle through," and with some reforms, the economy will continue to grow in the decades to come. The book *The Soviet Economy Toward the Year 2000* concludes with Professor Domar's words that the American economy has its own problems as well.

Interestingly, this vision is shared by practically the entire community. Only on the question of military expenditure is there some debate, but this involves only three people: William Lee, Steven Rosefielde and Franklyn Holzman. This is remarkable. These issues are very complex indeed, yet the whole community appears to be in agreement about them—nobody dissents. In the US, a country built on competition, there are practically no alternatives put forward to the views which I have just listed. Such uniformity, that is to say, such a monopoly of opinions, in itself looks suspicious.

I have stated that on my arrival in the West I did not understand what was important to Sovietologists. I hope that by now I do. My list includes the most fundamental issues; there is virtually no question of significance which does not relate directly to them.

I CLAIM that the picture is incorrect,[1] and below I shall present my alternative views. But first I shall set out my methodological contentions—the reasons why those incorrect conclusions were reached.

Statistics

Whether we like it or not, we have no alternative source of Soviet statistics besides the official Soviet one. We cannot simply deny these figures. However, reliance on them has been excessive. There are endless examples, of which the most striking is that until the mid-1970s the official data on military expenditure were taken at face value. We find that the foreign trade ingredient is not excluded from the calculation for the National Income Produced, figures reported for construction are not refined by subtracting expenditure on unfinished construction, the harvest figures are not corrected to account for losses, etc.[2] Yet another

[1] My disagreements with these views were published in the *Washington Post*, 27 Oct. 1980. (In full, published in the text of Hearings before the Subcommittee on Intelligence, US House of Representatives, 3 Sept. 1980.) There has been no subsequent reaction.

[2] No less than 20 per cent of the reported grain harvest consists of rubbish, weeds and excess moisture—*Novy Mir*, No. 8, 1985, p. 35.

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example is provided by the figures for investment and fixed capital. No figures for investment are published at current prices, and the Soviet literature is filled with direct statements about the falsity of the indicators. However, they are not adjusted in Western studies.

When I stated seven years ago at Harvard that the assertion that the state budget has no deficit was ridiculous, I was not believed, and the Soviet statistics on the subject are still accepted. True, there exist certain works in which questions are raised, there are cases of adjustments and corrections; but there is no real alternative to the *Narkhoz* figures. The only exception is the CIA series of GNP statistics, which I shall turn to below.

When in 1983 I began a project on productivity,[3] I had to create an alternative statistical basis. This is the only way to improve the accuracy of our estimates radically. An interesting attempt to do just this is currently being undertaken by Dmitri Steinberg, but his work has not yet been completed.

Rubles and Dollars

I am ashamed to be repeating the obvious, but people tend to forget that the Soviet economy works in rubles and kopecks, not in dollars and cents. The price structure of the Soviet economy is unique, and it cannot be measured in foreign currencies. So, for example, experts follow Soviet statistics on foreign trade, which are measured in dollars (or in so-called gold rubles), and reach erroneous conclusions. The most recent example is the discovery that in the last few years the Soviet military build-up has stopped. The basis for this conclusion depends on a reckoning in dollars.

Theory and Models

No doubt, Marxian theory is not the only summit of economic thought, but I humbly question the decision to base all studies of the Soviet economy on modern Western theories. In one way or another they describe the Western economies, but the Soviet economy is of a different kind. To give an example, such concepts as marginal propensity to save (or consume) have very different meanings, if they mean anything at all, within the Soviet economy—the consumer is not free to make the decisions.[4] As another example we find that in studies of productivity a lot has been written about capital/labour substitution, but Soviet managers do not operate in the Western economic environment. It is very unfortunate that, to the best of my knowledge, no attempt has been made to create a special theory of Soviet-type economies.

I am not, as we say in Russian, holding God by his beard; the creation of such a theory would be a monumental task. Years ago I suggested as one of its basic ingredients the fact that an economy of the Soviet type is

[3] The project was carried out by the Foundation for Soviet Studies for the Director of Net Assessment, US Department of Defense.

[4] See my exchange with Professor J. Pickersgill in *Soviet Studies*, Vol. XXXII, No. 4, Oct. 1980.

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governed by shortage. Later I discovered that as early as 1924, L. N. Kritsman demonstrated the theoretical inevitability of demand exceeding supply under socialism.[5] Professor Kornai's *Economies of Shortage* has been published, so I am not claiming to be original. But this very consideration—that the Soviet economic system is based on shortage—is quite instrumental in theoretical explanations of various phenomena.[6]

Models and Realities

I shall now turn to perhaps the most serious point. I have asked myself many times (and I have had plenty of time to do so) why I disagree with the American Sovietologists on so many issues. Apart from my own personality, what isolates my views so greatly from those of the entire community?[7] I have already stated that I was wrong in thinking it impossible to understand the economy from the outside. But possible does not mean easy. An outsider has to deal with artefacts, and he can never be certain of them. Two things follow as consequences of this uncertainty. Firstly, the outsider is very defensive about his work, taking any critique to be anathema. Secondly, lacking data and an understanding of the real facts, outsiders have to rely heavily on models, or on what they call the quantitative approach. I hasten to explain that I have nothing against modelling, modellers and quantitative studies. In the USSR I published a few books, and perhaps too many articles, on linear programming and its practical application. But excessive reliance on models is frankly too often an instrument for dismissing criticism and avoiding the discussion of realities. The most vivid example is provided by the case of William Lee. For years he insisted that the CIA figures on military expenditure were incorrect but even when his figures were accepted, it was said that he was right for the wrong reasons. I could give other examples, but rather I will say that on the one hand, before taking the results of calculations made with models seriously, we should first look at the data used. Unfortunately, models are often much better than data. On the other hand, ideas should not be dismissed because they are not based on models. Having lived in the USSR for 45 years, and having studied its economy from the outside for a further 11, I trust my intuition no less than I do the models. I am not saying that all models are bad, or should not be used, but I am suggesting that reasoning, simple logic and even anecdotal economics, must not be dismissed. I prefer to be right for the wrong reasons than to be wrong for the right reasons.

The basis for Western studies of the Soviet economy was established 30–40 years ago (in particular by Professor Bergson). For the time, that

[5] *Vestnik Kommunistícheskoy Akademii*. No. 9. 1924. (It was noticed recently by Ota Sik.)

[6] A Sovietologist recently said to me. "What are you talking about? Kornai's book has been published, so you cannot say that we ignore this phenomenon." Alas, I can. Although nobody denies that there are shortages, no one, as far as I know, tries to use the point in making theoretical considerations, and so far nobody has agreed with me that among other reasons the phenomenon of shortage forces us to have a *special* theory concerning a Soviet-type economy.

[7] As Pasternak said: "A solitary few seek the truth, and they break with those who love it insufficiently."

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basis was very good, especially considering the scarcity of information. But since then the latter has mushroomed radically, and yet surprisingly, over the last couple of decades, very little progress has been made. It is most surprising that not only the analysis, but even the conclusions being published now are similar to those published decades ago.[8]

THE very idea of presenting the national product of the USSR in accordance with Western concepts involves some problems which are insuperable. The first is the so-called non-material sector, the services. To determine the size of that sector, we need to know rates of wages, profits and depreciation. Wages are more or less determinable, but profits and depreciation are not. The most difficult is of course the military sector, but expenditure on health care, education, housing, etc. is not easy to determine either. According to the CIA's calculations,[9] the share of the services in the GNP had fallen from 29 per cent in 1950 to 20 per cent in 1980. I doubt that this is true. The impossibility of measuring the profits and depreciation in the non-productive sphere means, in effect, that attempts to determine the Soviet GNP cannot be fully successful.[10]

Secondly, the calculations using the model have two deficiencies. One is that they show incomes of the population as being considerably less than expenditures, which is impossible, but no explanation or hypothesis has been suggested to account for this. Another is in the public sector—there, incomes (revenues) are not large enough to account for the enormous military expenditure.

This leads me to my third point—the model cannot be used to determine Soviet military expenditure. In the first version of the CIA's GNP accounts for 1970, military expenditure was the same as in the official data, with adjustments for scientific research. A year later the Agency published a new version of the accounts, in which the military expenditure was twice as large. This is remarkable; the model is so universal that one can get, and one does get, military shares of both 5–6 per cent and 12–14 per cent of the total GNP. I have other problems concerning the model besides these. In particular, it ignores the huge deficit of the state budget, and underestimates the even huger gains from foreign trade.

Suppose we agree that instead of using Soviet figures of National Income or GVO (Gross Value Output), figures for the GNP should be used. But in every kind of analysis it is necessary to use other Soviet statistics which do not correspond to the GNP figures. I do not think that

[8] For example, the CIA study of Soviet and US consumption, published in 1981, reached numerically the same conclusion as previous studies.

[9] *USSR: Measures of Economic Growth and Development, 1950–80,* (Washington, DC, 1982).

[10] Professor Bergson pointed out that in Western GNP accounts profits from governmental activities are not counted either. Firstly, this practice is questionable—why, for example, should the same health service be counted differently, depending on whether it was performed by a private doctor or by one who is employed by a government agency? Secondly, the real shares of the government (state) sector in the US and the USSR are vastly different.

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the model should be abandoned; on the contrary, serious work must be done to improve it. In particular, the CIA's attempt to use the model to determine the real rate of growth (deflated series) is designed to answer one of the most urgent questions.[11] However, in addition a special model must be made which follows Soviet concepts and definitions, presenting the Soviet economy in its own figures. Input/output analysis is only part of this task. I stated above that we have no alternative to Soviet statistics. Unfortunately, the GNP model does not provide a reliable option; we shall have to devise one.

LET me now turn to Soviet–American comparisons, beginning with the standard of living. The question is of major importance in itself; besides, a very detailed study has been conducted and published by the CIA, and I devoted a lot of time to reviewing it. My overview, presented to the Pentagon's Office of Net Assessment, has been published,[12] so I will not go into detail, yet I strongly disagree with their results.

The authors made a large number of mistakes. For example, they compared the live weight of Soviet fish with the edible weight of American fish; the former weight is 2·5 times greater. They compared shoes of all types in the USSR with only leather shoes in the USA; the difference is twofold. The samples which they used were not always typical. They overstated some prices. In many instances they did not make allowances for obvious Soviet statistical distortions, such as figures for the fat content of milk. Although efforts were made to take quality differences into account, they were not sufficient. From the study we might conclude that Soviet meat is of the same quality as American, that Soviet bicycles are also of the same quality, etc.

I have a number of serious methodological disagreements with the CIA report, particularly over the fact that the enormous differences in trade services were ignored.[13] The study claims that the Soviet level of per capita consumption is approximately one third of the American; in my estimation, because of this factor (the trade services) alone, the statistic should rather be a fourth. The mammoth variety of American goods and services was also ignored.

To sum up, on the basis of a very detailed examination of the study, I concluded that the Soviet per capita level of consumption was at best something like a fifth of the American. I agree with Professor Pipes, when in *Survival is Not Enough* he calls the CIA estimate fantastic. I submitted

[11] Strikingly, in the literature I found no discussion of the latest version of the model, or of the calculations of the GNP for 1950–80.

[12] In my book, *Ekonomika Nedostach*. A summary in English is published in *Russia*, No. 7–8, 1983.

[13] Professor Bergson argued that my approach—taking the price ratio for trade service as equal to the average ratio for all goods—is wrong. I agree that it is not ideal, and that attempts to compute a special ratio for trade services should be undertaken. But what I did is far preferable to Professor Bergson's method of taking the ratio as equal to zero. This is our principal point of disagreement. Professor Bergson and others think that if some factor cannot be quantified, it is better not to include it in the calculations. But as Professor Peter Wiles pointed out years ago, this is a tragic mistake—by excluding non-quantifiable factors from calculations, one is in fact attributing a zero coefficient.

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my report to the Pentagon two years ago. A copy was sent to the CIA; there was no response. The only reply was from Dr. John Hardt of the Library of Congress (communicated to me by Richard Kaufman), who judged my study qualitative but not quantitative, and without further comment dismissed my conclusions.

The significance of this issue should not be underestimated. As I have stated, the question is important in itself. Significantly, at the next round of discussions on the Helsinki Accords this subject is going to be on the agenda. Important for our topic, the methodology employed in comparisons of living standards is practically the same as that used for estimating the GNP and military expenditure.

TURNING now to the comparison of GNPs, according to the CIA's calculations, the Soviet GNP was 60 per cent of America's in 1976[14] and 55 per cent in 1982. I disagree. Having examined the CIA comparison of consumption, I simply cannot believe any other of their figures without checking them in the same way. Unfortunately, we do not have a publication on GNP comparisons including the necessary details. My arguments are as follows:

The figure of 60 per cent is based on comparison of three elements—personal consumption, investment, and military expenditure. Even if we believe the figures for the latter two elements, after my correction for consumption, the Soviet GNP cannot have been 60 per cent of the American, but must have been far less. Let me emphasize that my correction of consumption comparison is minimal. With regard to investment, the CIA's claim that in 1976 Soviet investment was about 20 per cent higher than American investment is ridiculous. Housing construction is far greater in the US than it is in the USSR. The American economy is also much larger, and renewal of its equipment occurs much faster. Only in so-called capital repair is Soviet investment larger, but its real value is at best questionable.[15] Let me add that the official Soviet figures, produced for the sole purpose of propaganda, show that Soviet investment is not greater than American.

With regard to military expenditure, the CIA reports that in 1976 the Soviets spent 136 per cent of American expenditure, which is also unbelievable. If we exclude expenditure on personnel, the figure implies that the Soviets invested at least twice as much as did the Americans in procuring weapons. Below we shall see that the CIA underestimates the military share of the Soviet national product. I shall also add that, being a hawk, I am not inclined to underestimate the Soviet military build-up. Yet the assertion that Soviet military procurement was twice as large as America's has no foundation; besides, it contradicts the Agency's assertions about comparative numbers of weapons *in natura*.[16] In other

[14] For example, *Soviet Economy in a Time of Change*, Vol. 1, 1979, p. 378.

[15] Recently they decided to abandon capital repair as a special category. *Izvestiya*, 21 Sept. 1985.

[16] "If all personnel costs are subtracted from both sides . . . the Soviet level is about 30 per cent greater than the United States' in 1978." *Allocation of Resources in the Soviet Union and China—1979*, p. 46.

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words, simple considerations of these elements of the GNP indicate clearly that it is much smaller than is commonly believed.

In the 1960s Professor Bergson compared the sizes of the two economies. In his calculations he did not take into account the difference in quality of Soviet and American goods.[17] The comparison was really quantitative, so Dr John Hardt evidently liked it. Professor Bergson wrote[18] that in those comparisons for 1965, the USSR produced 35 per cent of the American GNP in "ruble valuation," and 57·5 per cent in "dollar valuation"—that is, an approximate average of 45 per cent. Let us believe those figures. But if, additionally, quality differences were taken into account, the size of the Soviet economy would not be 45 per cent, but far less. Those differences are so enormous that in the same calculations the comparative size of the Soviet economy, if the quality differences were counted, would be, I estimate, at best 30 per cent of the American . This being so, how can we believe that from 1965 to 1976 the gap was bridged so significantly—to 60 per cent?

Next, I am also worried that these estimates portray the Soviet economy as even larger than do propagandistic exercises by Moscow statisticians. Indeed, the CIA comparison of the GNP rates it at 60 per cent of the American. The Soviets claim that in national income figures in dollars, it is 67 per cent. If 67 per cent is translated back into the GNP and the ruble measurement is added, the result is significantly less than 60 per cent.[19]

Finally I submit another very simple consideration. American agriculture produces more than the Soviet. Though the American population is smaller, it eats far better, and America exports food, whereas the USSR imports it.[20] Nevertheless, let us assume that the two agricultures are equal in size. American agriculture constitutes something like three per cent of the GNP.[21] With regard to Soviet agriculture, the picture is not so clear; estimates vary. According to the CIA, in 1976 Soviet agriculture produced 16·7 per cent of the GNP.[22] From this one may easily conclude that the total Soviet GNP was at most five and a half times less than the American. One may say that one of these percentage estimates is in rubles and the other in dollars, so the geometric mean is bound to turn out differently. Granted that in the CIA comparisons ruble-dollar and dollar-ruble price ratios for food with American and Soviet weights are rather close to one another. I would add

[17] During the discussion, Professor Bergson argued that he had written six pages discussing the problem, and had even given a table with pluses and minuses for each factor. True, but in his *calculations and resulting figures*, neither his considerations nor pluses and minuses were included.

[18] In D. J. Daly (ed.), *International Comparisons of Prices and Output*, (Columbia University Press, 1972).

[19] For an elementary calculation on this point, see *Ekonomika Nedostach*, p. 386ff. and p. 466.

[20] In the words of Academician Tigran Khatchaturov, ". . . the USSR puts out less agricultural produce than the USA." *Voprosy Ekonomiki*, No. 4, 1985, p. 75.

[21] See, for example, *Statistical Abstract of the US*, 1981, p. 422, where it is shown that in 1976, agriculture, forestry and fisheries together constituted less than three per cent of the GNP.

[22] *USSR: Measures of Economic Growth and Development, 1950–80*, p. 61. In itself this claim is strange—the Soviet estimate is much higher (for 1980, the figure is even lower—13.9 per cent).

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that parities for agriculture are not too far from the parities for the economy as a whole. Certainly we have to compare carefully the American and Soviet definitions of agriculture, and of course I am not saying that the Soviet GNP is exactly five and a half times smaller than the American. Still, I cannot imagine how those who claim that the Soviet GNP is 60 per cent of the American would explain the results of this comparison of the two agricultures.

This problem is not easy. I cannot myself assuredly state the precise comparative size of the Soviet national product, but I am asserting that the economy is much smaller than is believed, and in any case it is not the second largest in the world; in particular, it is smaller than that of Japan. Thus my evaluation of the Soviet economy is very different from that commonly held, and the question is, why? Various reasons are listed in my publications—among them are obvious mistakes in price parities, which do not properly account for differences in quality. I shall add yet another.

The Soviet economy has an enormous number of employees, tremendous fixed capital, vast areas of arable land, and maybe the largest deposits of natural resources in the world, but this huge economic potential is put to extremely inefficient use. A lot of what is produced goes towards intermediate goods, and is then wasted. Consider, for example, that only a quarter of all potatoes grown leave their producers; that the country produces more steel, more oil, more cement and more milk than does the US; that only a quarter of the total industrial production goes towards personal consumption. All this is very well-known, and one might say that it is one of the reasons why, in the West, the Soviet national product is measured not in GVO, but using the concept of GNP; supposedly the latter takes into account only the so-called final product. Unfortunately, this is not quite so. This question—how our measurements reflect that the Soviet economy produces more intermediate than final products—should be carefully scrutinized.

THE question of military expenditure is extremely broad and complex, so I will limit myself to some very brief considerations. The basic model for GNP, as I have already stated, does not provide a way to determine the amount of military expenditure in rubles. Even intuitively it is quite obvious that the military share of the Soviet GNP cannot be as low as 12–14 per cent.[23] We are told that this is the result of special calculations, but this does not convince me. Professor Henry Rowen, in an excellent paper, said that the very preciseness of such estimates makes one suspicious. And of course, what we know about the calculation procedure is not very encouraging. Soviet weapons costs are first estimated as if they were produced in the US, and then the dollar values

[23] I insist here on intuition, especially since it is not only mine, but that of practically all other former and current Soviet citizens (including Academician Sakharov) who have written on the subject.

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are converted into rubles. The procedure is very far from perfect, but that is not my main point. As we know, the basic secret of Soviet military expenditure is that there are exceptionally good conditions for military industries, which are not reflected in cost. And I could not believe my eyes when I saw that ruble–dollar ratios for defence and space are practically the same as for the whole GNP.[24]

Why do I disagree with the notion that the military share of the GNP is as low as 12–14 per cent? Firstly, it follows from my comparisons of the total sizes of the Soviet and American GNPs.[25] Secondly, it follows from what I have just stated—that the CIA calculation ignores the exceptionally good conditions for military industries. I see no way to quantify the factor *precisely*, but would dare to suggest that conditions in military industries are at least 50 per cent better than in other industries. So, if the CIA estimates the military share at 12–14 per cent, I would assert that it is not less than 20 per cent of the GNP.

Recently, over and over again, statements have been made that the Soviet expenditure for military procurement has scarcely grown since 1977, purely because such are the estimates of both the CIA and the DIA. The *Washington Post* referred to these assessments as the unmasking of one of the myths of the Reagan administration. At least two comments are relevant: first, an increasingly important element of military expenditure is constituted by the scientific development and production of weapons prototypes, but the estimates pertain only to procurement (reported expenditure on scientific research has grown rapidly). Secondly, the estimate confuses the issues because the calculation is made in dollars; in rubles the dynamics could be—and I am sure, are—quite different. I agree with William Lee, who years ago insisted on more thorough studies of the military share of the Soviet national product measured in rubles. The problem is exceptionally difficult, but not insoluble.

I WILL skip the financial details, since my views have been published before.[26] So far I have had no objections to my conclusions that the Soviet state budget is permanently in the red, that the population's savings are perhaps the biggest headache for the regime, and that the financial crisis is terrible. I shall now turn to foreign trade.

The price structure of the Soviet economy is vastly different from that of world markets, due to the financial iron curtain. Therefore, although the foreign trade balance in dollars is slightly negative,[27] in rubles it is

[24] *The Soviet Economy in a Time of Change*, Vol. 1, p. 379. They are a little different with regard to Soviet and US weights, but in geometric mean measurement they are very close to each other.

[25] The question is not simple. I claim that the Soviet GNP is overestimated *as compared with the American*, but here we are talking about the proportion of it. However, as I said, the CIA's calculation procedure determines the size of military expenditure *through* a dollar estimate.

[26] See my *Secret Incomes of the Soviet State Budget* (Martinus Nijhoff, 1981); "Financial Crisis in the USSR," *Soviet Studies*, Vol. XXXII, No. 1, Jan. 1980, and "Will Andropov Purge the Passbooks?" *Wall Street Journal*, 21 March 1983.

[27] During the last few years it was not, but the USSR still owes a lot to the West.

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very positive. This fact has been ignored. In my works on Soviet finance I demonstrated that earnings from foreign trade, namely imports minus exports, both in rubles, covered much but not all of the budget deficit. In other words, by selling grain to the USSR, the US, in addition to feeding Soviet cattle, plugs a huge hole in the State budget. But this is only part of the picture. Soviet statisticians include the foreign trade balance in reported figures for the national product. According to my calculations, the balance now accounts for no less than 11 per cent of the reported national income produced.[28] The significance of this is manifold.

Firstly, the reported figures overstate both the output and its rate of growth—when one excludes the foreign trade earnings, they become much smaller. Secondly, foreign trade earnings have to be excluded from calculations of productivity—this was never done. Thirdly, in the CIA accounts for the GNP this phenomenon was not appreciated. The accounts and the model follow Soviet statistics, which include these earnings not in national income utilized, where they belong, but in national income produced, where they do not. In the published GNP accounts for 1970, the import–export balance was included as 7·6 billion rubles, which is about right. But it is included in National Product by Sector of Origin (national product produced), which is not correct; no sector of the economy originated this 7·6 billion.[29] On the other hand, I am not sure that the CIA accounts of the GNP for consecutive years to 1970 include the import–export balance on a full scale. Currently it stands at not less than 60 billion rubles, and it is here perhaps that we should look for some of the funding of military expenditure.

MY LAST point concerns the current and prospective economic situation. Here too I find much with which to disagree. Firstly, all measurements of productivity in the CIA report were strongly biased by an unfortunate mistake. They arrive at their measurements by taking the CIA figures for output (GNP) and Soviet official data on capital stock. Apart from various other problems with the figures (I discuss these in my forthcoming report to the Office of Net Assessment), the CIA series has allegedly been corrected to account for inflation, but the official series on capital has not. Therefore, inadvertently, the calculations show lower-than-actual productivity. Thus, according to the authors of the report productivity growth became negative 10 years ago. If this is so, how do we explain the fact that the Soviet economy has survived, and even managed a military build-up in the 1970s?[30]

[28] Those figures can be calculated rather precisely on the basis of data in the statistical yearbook of COMECON (e.g. the yearbook for 1978, p. 42), and estimates for forestry and "other branches" from input-output tables. I wrote on this in the *Wall Street Journal*, 13 March, 1985.

[29] See *USSR: Measures of Economic Growth and Development, 1950–80*, p. 135.

[30] Laurie Kurtzweg and David Epstein pointed out that my logic is not convincing, because in spite of negative productivity, the economy developed with additional labour and capital. Very true; yet in considering the prospects for an economy, its productivity is the most important indicator. The moment when productivity growth becomes negative is the sign of a crisis.

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Amusingly, the authors of these calculations apparently did not believe their own figures. Indeed, in my first major disagreement with them I asserted that the Soviet economy was in trouble, but even those who established the negative growth of productivity rejected this assertion. Only in 1981, or maybe in 1982, did people begin talking about problems within the Soviet economy. In an extensive series of my own measurements, I concluded that the Soviet economy hit negative productivity growth only towards the end of the 1970s.

When I arrived in the US 11 years ago, I was very much surprised, among other things, by the over-rosy view of the USSR's economy. Obvious problems were explained away in an optimistic tone. Some talked about "maturation"; Professor Berliner, commenting several years ago on my presentation, said that certain economies—for example, the Swiss—function successfully with a very slow growth rate. A lot was said and written about bad weather, the oil situation, and demographic difficulties which, while true in itself, distracts from the economy's true main characteristics.

I am stating something else. If one trusts the CIA measurements of productivity, if one believes in "maturation," and in the decisive significance of the oil situation, one will also think that the economy, as experts claim, will somehow muddle through further; it has muddled through for more than a decade with negative productivity. In my opinion, the negative growth of productivity starting only at the end of the 1970s marks the beginning of the end for the Soviet economic system. I am in agreement with Professor Marshall Goldman; I think that the economy is in a crisis; I also think that it will continue to deteriorate.

A few things must be explained at this point. First of all, I reached my conclusion about the crisis before making calculations of productivity; the latter merely confirmed it. For a long while the situation was not so clear because of the huge reserves of unused labour, because everything was given over to investment, and because, I repeat, the Soviet statistics were believed excessively. In 1975 Professor Galbraith wrote in the *New York Times* that there were neither unemployment nor inflation in the Soviet Union.

One may say, and some (Professor Schroeder for example) do say, that the USSR has achieved significant successes. Such an assertion can be argued, but a few things are indisputable:

1. Regardless of the statistics you use and how you interpret them, they all show the same general trend: the pace of the economy is slowing down.
2. The sources of extensive growth are approaching their limits, and the Soviets can rely only on intensive development.
3. The economy does not operate in cycles: a downturn is not followed by an upturn (incidentally, this is one more example of the non-applicability of Western economic theories to the Soviet economy).
4. There is no known way to improve economic performance radically.

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> 10 years ago at a seminar at Harvard somebody asked me, "What would you do if you were in Kosygin's place?" My answer—that I would immediately resign—was not a joke. The Soviet economic situation is so tragic that only a real miracle, such as, for example, the discovery of a very cheap and safe method of harnessing nuclear energy, can, if not save, at least prolong it.

For years I have repeated the same very simple syllogism, and wonder why it is ignored. The syllogism runs as follows: the general tendency of practically all basic indicators is down: official statistics and CIA figures, rates of production output and of capital investment, labour productivity and the budget deficit (this is up, but it has the same significance). I understand that the details of each particular measurement are disputable, that some would even disagree with me about the budget deficit, but it cannot be denied that the economy's performance is worsening. What should we expect in the future? In spite of this long-term tendency, experts say that the economy will "muddle through." Why? Because such are the SOVMOD calculations. The model is based on extrapolation with some additional fancy tricks. But how the model could extrapolate falling rates of growth within stable growth is a mystery. Those who insist that the economy will continue to grow at a rate of 2–3 per cent a year should give some convincing reasons how and why the regime will if not reverse, then at least arrest the continuation of the downward tendency.

Some say that the economy has huge reserves. For example, the labour shortage is the result of low productivity, so as soon as the problem is resolved, the economy will surge ahead. It is very true that the economy is extremely inefficient, and in this sense it has colossal reserves. But to use those reserves a different economic system is needed. Some argue that there have been two upturns in the economy—in the second half of the 1960s and during the last two years. The first needs to be looked at more attentively, but the second simply did not take place. It can be easily demonstrated that the Soviet statistics are incorrect. In other words, the economy is not growing; at best, it is already stagnating.

Apart from statistics, the basic fact is that nothing has happened during the last few years which would turn the economy towards an upswing. Once again, I ask the question: what of real significance has occurred or is likely to occur within the Soviet economy to turn its course around? I see no answer to this question in either Soviet or Sovietological literature.

SOMETHING should be explained here. Why do capitalist economies have cycles, why do they go up and down? Among other reasons, three are fundamental: investment cycles, psychological "waves," and huge reserves of everything (economies of abundance). But in the USSR there are no possibilities for increasing investment; the economy is not governed by consumer psychology; and the economy of shortage does not have reserves.

The following question should have intrigued curious minds: the Soviet

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economy is very unbalanced— how were the imbalances overcome, how could the economy operate without sufficient reserves? My answer is that during fast growth, the impact of imbalances was lessened by increments in production—in fact, the increments were planned for this very purpose. And, of course, the slower the growth, the fewer the possibilities for struggling with imbalances. Some observers have suggested that the slow growth of the Soviet economy is preparing it for a renascence. Professor Schroeder explains the slow-down of the late 1970s as a planners' decision.[31] But on the contrary, low plan targets are not the reason, but the result of this slow-down. And low rates of growth do not prepare for an upturn, they increase the impact of imbalances. In other words, here we see the notorious vicious circle—the slow-down will increase imbalances, and imbalances will slow the economy down even more.

The crucial question is, what can happen in the future? Or, to put it differently, can we expect that the new Kremlin chieftain will reform the economy? Even if he does take some measures,[32] his "reforms" will not save it. I have seen an endless number of articles about reform, comparisons with Hungary, with Yugoslavia, scenarios and political exercises. Surprisingly, all the articles miss the main point—which is about ownership.

With regard to ownership, decentralization can be effective only if those who make the decisions and those who implement them are ruled by their own selfish interests—this should be axiomatic; I just cannot understand how this can be done without private ownership. The market system is a capitalist system, which cannot work without capitalists; it is as simple as that. Market socialism makes no more sense than socialism with a human face.

[31] *Soviet Economy*, No. 1, 1985.

[32] Although Gorbachov's speeches indicate no intention of implementing *real* reforms, the new Five-Year Plan and the last Party Congress promises can only be taken *cum grano salis*, as indicated by similar projections in the past.

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The Rise and Fall of the Marxist–Leninist Vanguard Party*

Francis Fukuyama

IT IS very common for Western observers of the USSR to characterize the Soviets as long-term practitioners of *Realpolitik* in their strategy towards the Third World. Moscow, it is asserted, has been largely indifferent to the ideological character or internal political organization of its friends and allies in the developing world, being ready to work pragmatically with virtually anyone that can further its state interests. Concomitantly, the Soviets are said to see their own influence and appeal as based primarily on hard-headed calculations of their ability to supply their clients with whatever they need, primarily military security but also political and economic aid in the context of the overall competition with the United States.

While there is a great deal of truth to this proposition, both objectively with regard to past Soviet policy, and subjectively as it concerns the Soviets' own self-understanding, it is an inadequate and in many ways misleading description of what the USSR has been up to in the Third World, particularly during the 1970s. Indeed, I would argue that the twin issues of ideology and internal political organization have been central preoccupations of Soviet policy-makers, and that changing Soviet views on this subject serve to delineate the major phases in the evolution of Moscow's strategy towards the Third World in the post-war period. While it is beyond question that the Soviet leadership regards foreign policy broadly in the context of power politics, they have at different times and with varying emphasis regarded ideology and political organization as among the most powerful of the tools available to them for furthering their own *Realpolitik* ends. In particular, Soviet Third World strategy during the late Brezhnev period was characterized by a pronounced emphasis on one specific form of political organization, the Marxist–Leninist Vanguard Party (MLVP). From the Soviets' perspective, the MLVP was a far more significant tactical innovation than any of the commonly noted policy instruments that first appeared during the late 1960s–early '70s, such as Cuban or East German proxy forces, a blue water navy, tactical transport aviation, and other types of military power projection capabilities. Indeed, Soviet expectations may have been too high: between 1975 and 1985, the MLVP proved to have a highly chequered record, with a growing number of Soviet observers openly acknowledging its problematic character. Much of the future course of

*This paper was prepared for the conference "The Soviet Union and the Third World: The Last Three Decades," sponsored by the Rand-UCLA Center for the Study of Soviet International Behavior, Bellagio, Italy, 11–15 Nov. 1985.

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Soviet Third World strategy is likely to revolve around the outcome of the current Soviet re-evaluation of the MLVP.

The Soviet focus on political organization and ideology rather than military force as the basis for global influence and power is not surprising given the history of the Bolshevik movement and the Soviet Communist Party. The Bolsheviks succeeded in November 1917 not because they were the most numerous or militarily powerful—indeed, they were one of the smaller parties represented in the Provisional Assembly—but because of their superior discipline and political organization. Lenin's primary legacy to the communist movement was the concept of a small, highly centralized elite party, which could be used as an effective means of seizing and consolidating political power. The utility of this concept was demonstrated by the Nazi Party in Germany, which came to power by retaining the same organizational principles but investing them with an entirely different ideology. It is not surprising then that the Soviets should regard the MLVP as an important route to political power in the Third World.

In this paper I will trace the evolution of the Marxist–Leninist Vanguard Party both in Soviet theory and practice. This evolution falls into four broad phases, the first three corresponding roughly to the tenures of the first three post-war general secretaries of the CPSU. Soviet policy appears to have entered a fourth, new phase starting with the accession of Yurii Andropov to the leadership of the Party. The contours of this period are not yet fully determined, and will be influenced heavily by the continuing process of succession both at the top and middle levels of the Soviet leadership, as well as by the preferences and inclinations of the new General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachov.

IN THE immediate post-war era, the Soviet Union placed very heavy emphasis on ideology as a means of determining the identity of its friends and enemies in the colonial world (most of the Third World still being under European domination at that time). Following the deepening of the Cold War and the commencement of the period of the *Zhdanovshchina* in 1947, Stalin and other Soviet spokesmen began to draw an extremely polarized view of international relations, in which countries not firmly in the socialist camp were written off as belonging to the imperialist one. Stalin's definition of the former category included only formal communist parties, and of those, only those directly dependent on and tied to the Soviet Union. He regarded all non-communist nationalists opposing the colonial system and leaders of newly independent countries like Nehru of India as no more than bourgeois "puppets" of the former metropolises whose sham "independence" only masked a continuing neo-colonial dependency. It is no accident that the only two initiatives undertaken by the USSR in the Third World between the end of the war and Stalin's death, the attempt to break off parts of northern Iran in 1946 and the encouraging of Kim Il-Sung to unify the Korean peninsula in 1950, involved use of formal communist parties in countries directly

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contiguous to the Soviet Union. Since these formal parties tended to be very weak (with the exception of the Chinese communists), Soviet influence in the Third World was very restricted throughout this period.

Post-war Soviet policy towards the Third World really began with Khrushchev's opening to the so-called "bourgeois nationalists,"[1] a heterogeneous collection of newly independent states whose leaders eschewed Marxism–Leninism but whose memory of colonial domination led them to adopt strongly anti-imperialist foreign policies. The shift in strategy was evident in policy before its announcement or development in the theoretical literature, through the Soviet Union's approbation of the first Afro-Asian conference of non-aligned states in Bandung, Indonesia in April 1955, the Czech-Egyptian arms deal of July of that year, and in the well-publicized visits by Khrushchev and Bulganin to Afghanistan, Burma, and India in August. This inaugurated a prolonged period during which the Soviet Union lent strong support to leaders such as Nasser of Egypt, Sukharno of Indonesia, India's Nehru, Kwame Nkhrumah in Ghana, and Modibo Keita in Mali.

The theoretical justification for this shift in strategy was initially laid out in Khrushchev's address to the 20th CPSU Congress in February 1956, then in the reports to the 21st and 22nd Congresses in 1959 and 1961 and the meeting of 81 communist parties in Moscow in 1960, as well as in a wide variety of books and articles on the Third World which appeared in this period. By admitting at the 20th Party Congress that there were a variety of ways to make the transition to socialism, Khrushchev legitimized a range of non-communist progressive forces in the Third World whose tremendous anti-imperialist potential had until then remained untapped by the Soviet Union. As Rostislav Ulyanovsky, the long-term deputy chief of the Central Committee's International Department, put it:

> In contemporary conditions, as the CPSU programme decrees, the national bourgeoisie in colonial, former colonial and dependent countries, detached from imperialistic circles, is *objectively* interested in undertaking the basic tasks of anti-imperialist and anti-feudal revolution.[2]

This line was not without its theoretical problems. Stalin, after all, had a point in denouncing bourgeois nationalists: by conventional Marxist analysis, societies had to pass through a capitalist period of development, involving the creation, *inter alia*, of a large and well-organized industrial proletariat, before a socialist revolution became possible. Opportunistic cultivation by the USSR of countries at an essentially feudal level of development for the sake of short-term foreign policy gains might ultimately backfire if they eventually followed a capitalist path of development.

[1] The terms "bourgeois nationalists," "national bourgeoisie," "national democrats," and "first generation revolutionary democrats" will be used here interchangeably, following Soviet practice. All of these terms are a subset of the larger category of "revolutionary democrats." See the categorization of Soviet clients given below.

[2] Italics added. "Ekonomicheskaya nezavisimost—blizhaishaya zadacha osvoboditelnogo dvizheniya v Azii," *Kommunist*, No. 1, 1962, p. 106.

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The response of Khrushchev and the theorists who supported him was to argue that the bourgeois nationalists would not simply serve the ends of Soviet foreign policy in the short run, but would eventually evolve ideologically in the direction of orthodox Marxism–Leninism. There was therefore a revival in interest in the idea of the so-called "non-capitalist path of development." Proponents of this theory were highly optimistic (excessively so, as they later recognized) about the possibility of underdeveloped states skipping the capitalist phase altogether, making the transition to socialism in a relatively short period of time, and ultimately arriving at a full acceptance of orthodox Marxism–Leninism. Khrushchev himself made a number of extravagant claims about the ideological development of his preferred clients, declaring the United Arab Republic's (UAR) Nasser a "Hero of the Soviet Union" and congratulating Algeria's Ben Bella on "the determination of the Algerian people to embark upon the socialist path."[3] But while Khrushchev touted his own successes for essentially political reasons, his optimism was shared at the time by a number of prominent theorists later known for their scepticism such as Georgii Mirsky[4] and Rostislav Ulyanovsky.

The implementation of Khrushchev's policy of support for bourgeois nationalists had several characteristic features. In the first place, the Soviets found themselves compelled to conduct relations with established governments on a state-to-state basis, and to drop their support for local communist parties and other non-state opposition forces. This is not to say that the Soviets were indifferent to the fate of their ideological brethren; Khrushchev engaged in open invective with the UAR's Nasser in 1958 and Iraq's Kassem in 1959 when the two Arab leaders began persecuting local communists. But while Moscow might have liked to play on both sides of the street, it was compelled by its bourgeois nationalist clients to stand by helplessly as local communists were jailed and in many cases shot.[5]

A second characteristic of Khrushchevian policy was the Soviets' tendency to cultivate ties with individual nationalist leaders like Nasser, Sukharno, and Nkhrumah, and to be largely indifferent to the political structures and institutions beneath them. While the Soviets sought to promote economic development and gave a lot of gratuitous advice to their clients, they did not seek to direct their political development by, for instance, helping them to create cohesive party organizations or by taking

[3] Robert Legvold. *Soviet Policy in West Africa* (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1970), pp. 190–192.

[4] On Mirsky, see Legvold (1970), pp. 177–178; on Ulyanovsky, see his articles, "Nekotoriye voprosy nekapitalisticheskogo razvitiya osvobodivshikhsya stran," *Kommunist*, No. 1, 1966; "Birmanskii narod nakhodit pravilny put'." *Kommunist*, No. 16, 1964; and "Programma natsionalnogo vozrozhdeniye," *Narody Azii i Afriki*, No. 4, 1964.

[5] While the Soviets have chosen to work through existing states, they have consistently made the fate of local communist parties an issue in their relations with non-communist clients. The Soviets warmly approved the outcomes in Syria and South Yemen, where the orthodox communist parties were accepted into a front with the ruling nationalist party, and bitterly attacked the Iraqi Ba'th Party for persecuting communists in 1977.

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control of coercive mechanisms like the internal security forces.[6] Indeed, they tended to be indifferent to the client's internal ideological character so long as there was a modicum of cooperation on foreign policy issues, and they were forced to show at least outward respect for a variety of syncretist nationalist doctrines such as African socialism, pan-Arabism, and in later years Islamic Marxism.

The third characteristic of the Khrushchev period was its heavy reliance on arms transfers and (secondarily) economic assistance as sources of leverage. Arms transfers proved to be the one area where the Soviet Union could be fully competitive with the United States in the Third World, supplying large quantities of cheap and technologically up-to-date weapons out of its own enormous inventories.[7] Economic aid, while relatively large in total dollar value, tended to be concentrated in a small number of high-visibility development projects in countries like the UAR, Afghanistan, and India. Apart from political support during crises, the Soviet Union did not have much else to offer its Third World clients in the form of more direct types of military support and intervention.

UNDOUBTEDLY Khrushchev's shift of Soviet policy away from orthodox communists to bourgeois nationalists had the effect of vastly increasing Soviet influence and prestige in the Third World. From a position of virtual isolation under Stalin, by the mid-1960s the Soviets had major footholds in the Middle East, Africa, South Asia, the Far East, and on the island of Cuba. This broadening of influence had a concrete military advantage as well, undermining US positions of strength such as the Middle East's northern tier and providing the Soviet navy with anchorages or facilities in Egypt, Syria, and Somalia.

But there were also certain critical weaknesses in the Khrushchevian policy of support for bourgeois nationalists. In the first place, many of Moscow's allies from the Khrushchev era proved highly unstable and vulnerable to sudden shifts in political fortunes. Soviet clients were overthrown in military *coups* in Indonesia and Algeria (1965), Ghana (1966), and Mali (1968). Since the rule of many clients of the Khrushchev era tended to be highly personalistic, the removal or defection of the single leader at the top tended to undermine the entire Soviet position in the country.

Second, even when those clients stayed in power, they tended to be highly unpredictable and often uncooperative with Soviet aims. It would be impossible to catalogue the instances in which a Soviet client acted contrary to Moscow's wishes; every study of Soviet dealings with

[6] Ulyanovsky, for example, argued in 1966 that in some cases it was possible for the broad masses to choose "the path of non-capitalist development beginning the movement towards socialism *in the absence of* proletarian dictatorship and an organized vanguard party." "Nekotoriye voprosy nekapitalisticheskogo razvitiya osvobodivshikhsya stran," *Kommunist*, No. 1, 1966.

[7] The Soviets were able to rebuild the inventories of their Arab clients in a matter of months, if not weeks, following the 1956, '67, '73, and '82 Middle East wars.

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particular countries and regions usually lists several. In high-stakes areas like the Middle East and South Asia, the Soviets found themselves getting dragged into local conflicts involving the risk of confrontation with the United States. In other cases, Soviet Third World allies would deliberately try to flaunt their independence from Moscow, as when the Syrians refused for over 10 years to conclude a Friendship and Cooperation Treaty, or when the Iraqis signed an accord with the Shah of Iran in 1975 and turned increasingly to France for arms. With the sole exception of Cuba, not a single bourgeois nationalist ally of the Khrushchev era adopted orthodox Marxism–Leninism as its governing ideology. The worst case from the Soviet standpoint was Egypt, the centrepiece of Soviet Third World policy in the '50s and '60s and the recipient of over $4 billion in cumulative aid, which between 1972 and 1976 defected altogether to the Western camp.

Third, arms transfers and economic aid proved to be an extremely poor source of leverage over intractable clients, as the United States has discovered in its dealings with allies like Turkey and Israel. Soviet efforts to force Nasser and then Sadat into a negotiated solution of the Arab–Israeli dispute by withholding arms deliveries backfired; when the latter expelled Soviet advisors from Egypt in July 1972, Moscow was compelled to resume shipments and in effect give the go-ahead for the October 1973 Middle East War in order to retain its position there. In other cases like Syria, the Soviets found themselves forced to provide increasingly greater quantities of ever more sophisticated weapons simply to stay in their client's good graces, their provision of SA-5 air defence missiles to Syria after the 1982 Lebanon War being only the most recent example.

Soviet disillusionment with bourgeois nationalist clients had already become apparent in the mid-1960s. Indeed, there is a certain amount of evidence that Khrushchev's colleagues, including Mikhail Suslov, Boris Ponomarev, and Aleksei Rumyantsev, were dubious about his grandiose claims on behalf of his favoured Third World clients while he was still First Secretary.[8] His policy towards the Third World was evidently one of the charges held against Khrushchev when he was deposed in 1964, and following his ouster an internal policy review was held in high Kremlin circles in which it was decided to provide support somewhat more selectively. As the decade progressed, Khrushchevian optimism about the likelihood of quick transition to socialism along the non-capitalist path of development gave way to increasing scepticism about the reliability of non-communist Third World states. Looking back in 1984 on the period of the late 1950s–early 1960s, Ulyanovsky noted that "Excessively optimistic researchers wanted to see in the personalities of Nasser or Ben Bella a Chernyshevsky who would change into a Plekhanov. Occasionally wishes were presented as reality."[9] The

[8] Legvold (1970), pp. 198–201.

[9] "O natsionalnoy i revolyutsionnoy demokratii: puty evolyutsii," *Narody Azii Afriki*, No. 2, March–April 1984. This is a somewhat ironic statement in view of the fact that Ulyanovsky shared much of this optimism while it was fashionable.

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particular problem with these Khrushchevian clients was their insufficient institutionalization of political power and their consequent inability to make permanent revolutionary change:

> . . . in a number of countries (Egypt, Mali, Sudan, Zaire, Ghana) [progressive forces] failed to create a revolutionary-democratic organization which would ensure the reliability of truly revolutionary-democratic accomplishments . . . [relying instead] on a national leader who, in turn, relied on the army, the security organ, his clan or his tribe.[10]

Or, as another academic commentator noted, "The problem of the necessity of changing a broad-scale organization into a vanguard organization was particularly critical after revolutionary democrats, first in 1966 in Ghana and then in 1967 in Mali, were removed from power."[11]

IN the late 1960s and early 1970s Soviet theoreticians began developing a two-fold solution to the weaknesses which came to be closely associated with the late Brezhnev period. The first aspect was the promotion of parties or national liberation movements which explicitly based themselves on Marxist–Leninist ideology;[12] while the second was the encouragement of these groups to transform themselves into formal vanguard parties once they came into power. The first aspect of the solution, support for self-proclaimed Marxist–Leninist groups, was in some sense a return to Stalin's preference for orthodox communist parties, though in its incarnation of the Brezhnev era this principle of selectivity was applied much less rigidly.[13] Soviet theoreticians recognized that, all things being equal, a self-proclaimed Marxist–Leninist state would be more likely to cooperate with the Soviet bloc reliably than, say, an African socialist, pan-Arab nationalist, or Islamic Marxist one, no matter how left-wing their doctrines (Karen Brutents was an important exception, as noted below). The heterodox ideologies tolerated by Khrushchev were nationalist at core and ultimately led to an unwillingness to cooperate fully with Soviet foreign policy on the part of the countries which espoused them. Unadulterated scientific socialism, by contrast, is an explicitly internationalist doctrine. As one author notes, the second generation of self-proclaimed Marxist–Leninists "differs from the revolutionary democrats of the 1960s (or national democracy) in that it more consistently speaks out from anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist positions, cooperates with the world communist movement and the world

[10] Ulyanovsky (1984), p. 14.

[11] Yurii N. Gavrilov, "Problems of the Formation of Vanguard Parties in Countries of Socialist Orientation," *Nations of Asia and Africa*, No. 6, 1980 (JPRS J-8 1111), p. 3.

[12] Or scientific socialism: the term is synonymous for Soviet authors and will be used interchangeably here.

[13] In contrast to Stalin, the Soviets in the 1970s continued to support first generation bourgeois nationalists in countries like Syria, India, Iraq, and Libya, where there was no obvious Marxist–Leninist alternative. The Soviets today do not regard any of the new regimes which emerged during the 1970s as genuine socialist states or their ruling parties as orthodox communist ones (with the exception of Cuba and Vietnam), and for this reason it is not clear that Stalin would have supported them.

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socialist system, and relies on the working masses."[14] Or as Ulyanovsky put it, "In the practical aspect [groups or parties oriented towards scientific socialism] enhance cooperation with the socialist countries to a new level and deliberately promote the expansion of such cooperation. They do not mistrust the socialist commonwealth or fear a 'communist penetration'."[15]

It should be noted that throughout the 1970s the Soviets themselves never took at face value the claims of the second generation states to have actually adopted Marxism–Leninism (with the exceptions of Cuba and Vietnam, which were classified as genuinely 'socialist'). Together with a couple of non-Marxist–Leninist regimes such as Algeria and Tanzania, they were lumped together under the rubric of "socialist-oriented" or "revolutionary-democratic" states,[16] and were said to be "approaching the positions of Marxism–Leninism." Our use of the term "Marxist–Leninist Vanguard Party" is therefore somewhat misleading since it describes the client's rather than the Soviets' perception. As one Soviet author put it, the most accurate term to describe this group would be the "vanguard revolutionary-democratic worker party," to indicate that it is "noy yet a communist party."[17] While these distinctions may seem to be quite meaningless from a non-communist perspective, as will be seen below they eventually provided the basis for a serious Soviet critique of the second generation states.

The second and perhaps more important aspect of the solution lay in the sphere of political organization. As one Soviet author put it,

> Under the conditions of a backward country . . . no group of revolutionaries, even the most sincere and consistent, can secure the orientation towards socialism of the bulk of the population and the work of the entire machinery of state without the presence of a vanguard revolutionary party of like-minded persons.[18]

Particularly during the 1970s, there was a great upsurge in Soviet writings on the subject of vanguard parties and their importance to the revolutionary development of Third World states.[19] Vanguard parties were seen as a means of stabilizing revolutionary power and consequently

[14] Yu. V. Irkhin, "Formation of the Vanguard Parties of the Working People in Socialist-Oriented Countries," *Nauchny Kommunizm*, No. 1, Jan.–Feb. 1985 (JPRS-UPS-85-059, 7/30/85), p. 9.

[15] Ulyanovsky (1984), p. 16.

[16] These two terms are synonymous in Soviet parlance, though Brutents' use of the term "revolutionary democrat" is considerably more expansive than that of most Soviet writers.

[17] Irkhin (1985), p. 10, footnote.

[18] Nodari Simoniya, "The Current Stage of the Liberation Struggle," *Aziya i Afrika Segodniya*, No. 5, May 1981.

[19] There is no end to Soviet writings on the importance of Marxist–Leninist Vanguard Parties. For a representative sample in addition to the sources quoted, see P. Manuchka, "The CPSU and Revolutionary-Democratic Parties," *Socialism: Theory and Practice*, 10 Oct. 1976; G. I. Shitarev, "Nekotoriye problemy evolyutsii revolyutsionno-demokraticheskoy organizatsii v napravlenii partiy-avangarda," *Narody Azii i Afriki*, No. 2, 1976; A. S. Kaufman, "Strategiya i taktika marksistsko-leninskikh partiy v osvobodivshikhsya stranakh," *Rabochii Klass i Sovremenny Mir*, No. 3, May–June 1984; as well as the Zagladin collection (1984) cited above. For further discussion, see also David Albright, "Vanguard Parties in the Third World," in Walter Laqueur, (ed.), *The Pattern of Soviet Conduct in the Third World* (Praeger, New York, 1983), pp. 208–225.

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pro-Soviet orientation by providing the local regime with a firm organizational base, "a well-organized party uniting representatives of the working people, supporters of the socialist road, a party free of pro-bourgeois and anti-socialist elements, a party guided by a progressive ideology."[20] A vanguard party would institutionalize the socialist orientation and permit it to survive the whims or passing of individual Third World leaders like a Nasser or Sukharno, and would provide the Soviets with multiple points of entry as an alternative to the single leader at the top. Vanguard parties were seen as one way to make local revolutions in some sense irreversible, and to avoid the "voluntarism" of the Khrushchev generation of bourgeois nationalists.[21]

Centralization of power in the hands of a reliable political organization was particularly important in view of Moscow's declining ability to assist and control the economic development of its client states. As Elizabeth Valkenier and others have noted,[22] Soviet developmental economists in the 1970s came increasingly to the conclusion that the traditional socialist formula for economic development, calling for rapid nationalization of foreign and private property and isolation of the local economy from the world capitalist economic system was inadequate, and that developing countries would actually benefit from a NEP-like policy of "gradual" transition to socialism. Whatever the Soviet leadership thought of this argument on its merits, it provided a convenient justification for the Kremlin's increasing reluctance to foot the bill for large-scale economic development. But the retention of a private sector and continuing integration with Western economies poses potentially grave dangers for the state's future political orientation unless there is a reliable party in charge. As Boris Ponomarev put it, "The experience of many socialist-oriented countries shows that a useful role can be played by private enterprise—*with corresponding supervision by the state*."[23] Existence of a strong vanguard party potentially allows Moscow to have its cake and eat it too, with the West assisting in the economic development of Marxist–Leninist states which remain closely aligned with the USSR politically.

IN A remarkable convergence between theory and practice, the Soviet Union undertook the promotion of MLVPs during its intense period of Third World activism that began in the early to mid-1970s. Soviet writers themselves are quite explicit about the change that took place in their client base as a result, and speak of a "second generation" of states very different from those of the Khrushchev era. This shift is described in the

[20] Alexei Kiva, "Revolutionary-Democratic Parties: Some Trends of Development," *Aziya i Afrika Segodniya*, No. 4, 1978, pp. 43–44.

[21] See Gavrilov (1980); V. F. Li (ed.), *Partii i revolyutsionny protsess v stranakh Azii i Afriki: Shornik Statei* (Nauka, Moscow, 1983); and Ulyanovsky (1984).

[22] See particularly Elizabeth Valkenier, *The Soviet Union and the Third World: An Economic Bind* (Praeger, New York, 1983), and Jerry Hough, *The Struggle for the Third World* (Brookings, Washington, 1986).

[23] Italics added, Boris Ponomarev, *Information Bulletin*, Nos. 23–24, 1980, p. 68.

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1984 edition of *The World Communist Movement*, a handbook of official Soviet positions concerning the worldwide revolutionary process edited by Ponomarev's first deputy in the International Department, Vadim Zagladin. The section on the Third World states:

> It is possible today to speak of two groups of countries of a socialist orientation and of a *second generation of revolutionary democrats, who are closer to scientific socialism*. The distinctiveness of the new group of countries of a socialist orientation (Angola, Ethiopia, Afghanistan, Kampuchea, the PDRY, and others) is that they have to build the economy virtually from scratch, and that a working class is springing up in them together with industry. *The political regimes of this group of countries are distinguished by great clarity of class positions. A process in which new revolutionary parties are coming into being, parties which at their congresses have declared their adoption of Marxist–Leninist ideology, is under way there. It is these parties which are heading the revolutionary development.*[24]

The list of second generation Marxist–Leninist clients is actually longer than the one given in the Zagladin collection; between 1964 and 1984 the number of regimes proclaiming scientific socialism as their guiding ideology climbed from three (North Korea, North Vietnam, and Cuba) to 16 (those three, plus Angola, Mozambique, Ethiopia, the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen [PDRY], Afghanistan, Nicaragua, Laos, Kampuchea, Madagascar, Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde, Benin, and the People's Republic of the Congo.[25] In addition, Marxist–Leninists were in power in Grenada until the American invasion in October 1983, and there were reports of a communist *coup* attempt in Iraq in 1977. Beyond the new regimes brought to power, the Soviets also provided substantial support for two of its existing Marxist–Leninist allies, Cuba and Vietnam. Moscow's underwriting of their expansionist foreign policies led to a rapid growth in their allotments of military and economic assistance, to the point where Cuba was receiving an annual subsidy to the order of $5 billion and Vietnam $1 billion. While Soviet authors tend to treat this sudden proliferation of Marxist–Leninist regimes as an autonomous socio-political phenomenon, the truth of the matter is that the USSR and its socialist allies—particularly Cuba and East Germany—played a major role in helping a number of them come to power (as in the case of the MPLA in Angola), or to stay in power once there (as in the case of Ethiopia, Afghanistan, Mozambique, Nicaragua, etc.).

A case could be made for the Soviet point of view, that is, that

[24] Italics added. Vadim Zagladin, (ed.), *The World Communist Movement* (JPRS UPS-84-034-L. 29 Aug. 1984). The section on the Third World was written by S. I. Semenov. Division of Third World clients into two generations is quite common in Soviet writings; for example, Ulyanovsky (1984, I, p. 13) refers to a "second echelon" of states advancing to the proscenium "approximately during the mid-1970s." See also Georgii Kim, "National Liberation Movement: Topical Problems," *International Affairs*, No. 10. Sept. 1984, p. 48.

[25] This trend was noted in Donald Zagoria, "Into the Breach: New Soviet Alliances in the Third World," *Foreign Affairs*, Spring 1979. See also my own article, "A New Soviet Strategy," *Commentary*, Oct. 1979.

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Moscow's acquisition of a number of self-proclaimed Marxist–Leninist clients was simply the result of the typical Soviet habit of responding to available opportunities, rather than being the consequence of a deliberate policy choice. But this ignores the real margin of choice actually available. In Angola, for example, the Soviets could simply have waited for the three-way civil war between the MPLA, UNITA, and FNLA to resolve itself, and then cultivate ties with the winner—such would have been the *typical* policy of an earlier decade.[26] Similarly, there was no need to intervene massively on behalf of the Ethiopian Dergue when it was attacked by Somalia in 1977, were it not for the Soviets' apparent concern for the character of the regime in Addis Ababa, and the quality of their relations with it. Even had the Dergue fallen the Soviets would probably have maintained some sort of foothold in Ethiopia and would not, moreover, have jeopardized their position in Somalia.

The Soviets and their allies did not, of course, abandon their ties with the earlier generation of non-Marxist clients like Syria, Libya, or India in this period. The Soviets had invested considerable prestige in these countries, which were in any case highly important to Moscow by virtue of their size, wealth, or geostrategic position. Being relatively stable states, they gave the Soviets no opportunity to encourage alternative Marxist–Leninist leaderships. Nonetheless, where they had this option, their behaviour clearly indicated a preference for national liberation organizations or parties proclaiming adherence to orthodox scientific socialism.

With the exception of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), none of the second generation clients began their existence as orthodox communist parties, but evolved out of a variety of national liberation fronts or military juntas which only later proclaimed their adherence to Marxism–Leninism. In these cases the Soviets then implemented the second half of their theoretical solution: to encourage these groups, once in power, to reorganize themselves as formal Leninist vanguard parties. This occurred in Mozambique (February 1977), Angola (December 1977), the PDRY (October 1978), and Ethiopia (September 1984). Soviet pressure to form a vanguard party was most evident in Ethiopia, where the ruling Dergue formed the Committee for Organizing the Party of the Working People of Ethiopia (COWPE) in 1979 largely to satisfy Soviet demands, prior to the actual establishment of the Workers' Party of Ethiopia. Indeed, there is evidence that the Mengistu Haile Miriam and the other military leaders of Ethiopia understood full well Soviet motives in pressing for a vanguard party, and resisted the idea for as long as they did precisely to avoid giving them an extra source of leverage.[27] Soviet writers have criticized the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) in Nicaragua for not having

[26] Jonas Savimbi's current ties with the West do not imply that he would have been unwilling to accept Soviet patronage in 1975 had he emerged on top.

[27] See Paul Henze, "Communism in Ethiopia," *Problems of Communism*, Vol. 30, No. 3, 1981.

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a vanguard party organization as well; the fact that it has not done so yet has led to a lower ranking for Nicaragua in Soviet priorities among Third World clients.

IN contrast to the somewhat distant state-to-state relationships maintained with the first generation bourgeois nationalists, promotion of MLVPs requires a much greater willingness on the part of the Soviets to interfere in the internal affairs of their clients. This is because Moscow has to be involved not only in a second generation client's foreign policy, but in its domestic character as well. This has required not only military intervention to ensure the client's initial coming to power—Marxist–Leninist groups being, by and large, more narrowly based than their bourgeois nationalist counterparts and therefore less likely to do so on their own—but also active participation in what might be called "Leninist state-building," that is, the creation of powerful centralized institutions to help consolidate the regime's control.[28] Beyond simple exhortations to establish vanguard parties, the Soviets have helped their clients in many concrete ways, through the training of party cadres in party-organizational work, establishment of internal security organs, seizure and control of at least the "commanding heights" of the economy, purging of unreliable elements, agitational and propaganda activities, etc.

Moscow's socialist allies have been particularly important to the process of Leninist state building because they bring special capabilities to bear which conveniently complement those of the Soviets themselves. Many aspects of the Cuban role are well-known and do not need to be detailed here. The Cubans have provided substantial (in most Third World contexts) military manpower for direct intervention on behalf of clients, being less provocative to the United States and other Western countries than Soviet troops, and at the same time more acceptable to Third World audiences.[29] But in addition to their military role, the Cubans have provided a variety of other services designed to preserve the *character* of a particular regime, and to encourage it to develop along Marxist–Leninist lines. Following the military *coups* in Algeria in 1965 and Ghana in 1966, Cuban forces began concentrating on the problem of regime security. They served in the presidential guards of Massaba-Debat in the People's Republic of the Congo and Sekou Toure in Guinea-Conakry, and were credited with having suppressed a Congolese army revolt in June 1966.[30] The Cuban General Directorate of

[28] See Alex Alexiev, *The New Soviet Strategy in the Third World*, N-1995-AF (The Rand Corporation, Santa Monica, June 1983).

[29] The Cubans also serve as Moscow's eyes and ears, being more sensitively attuned to Third World developments and readier to recognize revolutionary opportunities than the Soviets. The Cubans, for example, understood the potential of the Sandinistas in Nicaragua long before the Soviets, and were instrumental in uniting the three FSLN tendencies prior to the fall of Somoza in 1979. See Brian Crozier, "The Soviet Satellitization of Cuba," *Conflict Studies*, No. 35, May 1973, pp. 14–16, and "The Surrogate Forces of the Soviet Union," *Conflict Studies*, No. 92, 1978, p. 9.

[30] Crozier (1978), pp. 9–10, and Melvin Croan, "A New Afrika Korps?" *Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 3, No. 1, Winter 1980, p. 31.

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Intelligence (DGI) was reorganized by the KGB in 1971 and is reportedly controlled to a large degree by Soviet intelligence officials. The two intelligence services (together with the East Germans) collaborate extensively in Latin America and Africa in helping to keep vulnerable client regimes in power. The Cubans also assisted in the establishment of popular militias in places like Sierra Leone, Equatorial Guinea, and the PDRY, which provide the regime with a counterweight to the regular military should it seek to stage a *coup*. Other Leninist state building activities are more mundane, such as the training of party cadres, reception of innumerable party delegations in Havana, and the indoctrination of some 10,000 Angolan children on the Isle of Youth off the southern coast of Cuba.

Moscow's other major proxy, the East Germans, specialize in two areas: internal security and party-organizational work. While less visible than the Cubans, the East German ability to provide these services is highly critical to the building of MLVPs. The East German *Ministerium für Staatsicherheit* (MfS) has played a key role in organizing the security apparati in a number of states: the MPLA's Department of Information and Security, the National Service for Popular Security in Mozambique, the General Directorate of State Security in Nicaragua, the Libyan *Mukhabarat*, and other organizations in Ethiopia, the PDRY, Guinea-Bissau, San Tome, and Grenada.[31] Penetration of client security services not only provides the Soviets with up-to-date intelligence, but also gives them a means of removing a recalcitrant or deviationist client. In the PDRY the East Germans built up the internal security apparatus under the leadership of Muhsin al-Sharjabi, which was instrumental in helping to oust Rubai Ali when it appeared that he was moving the country out of the socialist camp in June 1978. Moscow's ability to control unreliable clients through direct police methods should be contrasted with the Soviet lack of options when expelled from Egypt in 1972. East Germans have served in the personal bodyguards protecting Ethiopia's Mengistu, Mozambique's Machel, and Libya's Qaddafi.[32] The East Germans have also been very active in the field of party-organizational matters. They have established schools for the training of party cadres in places like Mozambique and the PDRY, the latter of which had produced more than 10,000 graduates by 1979. Moreover, large numbers of Third World communists have been brought to Germany for study, and the East Germans have assisted in such esoteric tasks as the writing of South Yemen's lengthy socialist constitution. These specialized services come in addition to more mundane operations like military training and economic assistance.

[31] For more on South Yemeni–East German relations, see Laurie Mylroie, *Politics and the Soviet Presence in the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen: Internal Vulnerabilities and Regional Challenges*, N-2052-AF (The Rand Corporation, Santa Monica, Dec. 1983), pp. 12–29.

[32] Qaddafi's personal bodyguard over the past few years has been trained by the East Germans, and is responsible for saving the Libyan leader's life on at least two occasions. *L'Express*, 4–10 Nov. 1983, pp. 104–105.

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IN PRACTICE, promotion of MLVPs has been a mixed blessing. On the one hand, they have indeed cooperated closely with the Soviet bloc, signing Friendship and Cooperation treaties with Moscow, permitting relatively free air and naval access to the Soviet military, supporting sympathetic national liberation movements and participating in the socialist "collective security system," voting with the USSR in the United Nations, etc. On the other hand, these regimes have tended to be weak and narrowly based, lacking the broad nationalist legitimacy of the first generation of nationalist clients, and heavily dependent on Soviet bloc support for their initial rise to power and/or their ability to remain in place. As a result, Angola, Mozambique, Afghanistan, Nicaragua, Kampuchea, Ethiopia, and South Yemen have all faced indigenous opposition guerrilla movements, forcing the Soviets to assist in costly counter-insurgency wars.[33] The Soviet political leadership demonstrated growing awareness of the problematic character of their recent "achievements." Brezhnev's report to the 26th CPSU Party Congress, delivered in March 1981, had a distinctly more sober tone than the one he presented to the 25th CPSU Party Congress in 1976. While in the latter he noted an increase in the number of countries which had chosen the socialist orientation, he added that "the development of these countries along the progressive path does not, of course, proceed uniformly," but is "taking place in complex conditions." As a whole, "the period after the 25th Congress was not an easy one. There were many difficulties both in the economic development of the country and in the international situation."[34]

Largely as a result of the second generation's mixed record, Soviet theorists, as well as important members of the Soviet leadership, began to take a second look at the political development strategies undertaken during the Brezhnev years, and to posit other courses of action. Most important was a rethinking of the Marxist–Leninist Vanguard Party. Soviet writers (with some important exceptions) did not criticize the concept of the MLVP itself as the theoretically ideal form of political organization for Third World states, but rather expressed increasing scepticism that it was either possible for existing revolutionary-democratic groups to make a successful transition to true Marxist–Leninist Vanguard Parties, or that those groups which had already formally made the transition had really done so in practice. Moreover, countries of the second generation started out from an even lower level of political and economic development than their predecessors, making yet more complicated the bypassing of the capitalist stage. Many of the criticisms levelled by Soviet authors were reminiscent of those expressed

[33] See Francis Fukuyama, "The New Marxist-Leninist States and Internal Conflict in the Third World," in Uri Ra'anan et. al., *Third World Marxist–Leninist Regimes: Strengths, Vulnerabilities, and U.S. Policy* (Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis, Cambridge, 1985).

[34] *Dvadtsat Shestoi Syezd Kommunisticheskoy Partii Sovetskogo Soyuza, 23 fevrala—3 marta 1981 goda. Stenograficheskii Otchet*, p. 29.

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during the 1960s and early 1970s, only their targets this time were not the bourgeois nationalists but the new, self-proclaimed Marxist–Leninists.

Typical of the sort of scepticism about Third World MLVPs expressed in the early 1980s is an article by Nodari Simoniya, a section head at the Oriental Institute in Moscow. Simoniya notes five preconditions which must be met before countries can successfully make the transition to fully-fledged socialist societies, including the eschewing of "leftism" and a solution to national-ethnic problems, and implies that few, if any, of Moscow's Third World allies have managed to meet them. He openly criticizes the PDPA in Afghanistan, where "a part of the former Afghan leadership tried without justification to accelerate social transformations and to raise them immediately to the level of the people's democratic revolution." While he underlines the importance of vanguard parties, he takes a slap at countries like Angola and Mozambique by noting that the fact that they created formal parties "does not mean, of course, that such parties immediately become communist ones."[35]

Similar warnings about the dangers of mistaking declarative socialism for the real thing can be found in the writings of a wide variety of Soviet authors. In a collection of essays by a number of prominent Soviet experts on the Third World published in 1982, "the authors underscore the complex and contradictory nature of [the stage of socialist orientation] and warn about the dangers of attempts to 'accelerate it . . . into socialist ones, to identify it with socialist reconstruction and thereby to view national democrats as confirmed adherents of scientific socialism'."[36] As noted previously, Soviet authors have always been very careful to draw distinctions between radical socialist-oriented countries, including those with formal vanguard parties, and genuine socialist countries.[37] As one writer put it:

> . . . does the designation of the socialist-oriented states as 'communist' or even 'socialist' really correspond to the truth? Of course not. The leaders of Socialist Ethiopia, the only socialist-oriented country in Africa where the official state name contains the word 'socialist,' have repeatedly noted that it is not an appraisal of the existing social and political order but a goal sought by the people.[38]

[35] "The Present Stage of the Liberation Struggle," *Aziya i Afrika Segodniya*, No. 3, 1981.

[36] M. M. Avsenev, review of *Sotsialisticheskaya orientatsiya osvobodivshikhsya stran. Nekotoriye voprosy teorii i praktiki* by Karen Brutents, Anatolii Gromyko, Alexei Kiva, G. F. Kim, G. I. Mirsky, Yevgenii Primakov, V. F. Stanis, Gleb Starushenko, G. V. Smirnov, and Rostislav Ulyanovsky, in *Narody Azii i Afriki*, No. 5, Oct. 1984, p. 184.

[37] Kiva (1978, p. 46) is careful to distinguish between "vanguard revolutionary-democratic parties and a party of the proletarian vanguard (i.e. a genuine communist party)"; formation of the vanguard party is a step, but only a step, towards becoming a true Marxist–Leninist one.

[38] Irkhin (1985), p. 11. Irkhin goes on to say "Also unscientific is the attempt to declare that the vanguard worker parties are communist." Irkhin's view of Ethiopia is somewhat disingenuous, as Mengistu Haile Miriam has on occasion referred to himself as "the Communist leader." See Paul Henze (1981).

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RESERVATIONS about MLVPs have been expressed by the two Central Committee International Department deputies responsible for the Third World, Rostislav Ulyanovsky and Karen Brutents. The former in two articles published in 1984 notes that there is no reason to think that the changes going on in countries like Angola, Mozambique, or the PDRY should be similar to the positive example of Vietnam, where the transition to socialism was led by an orthodox communist party.[39] Indeed, observation of these cases suggests that "the idea of advancing towards socialism without a firm communist vanguard . . . is today no less topical than it was 20 years ago." "Declarative radicalism" does not automatically produce a transition to socialism; indeed, it may exacerbate the situation by triggering sharp internal opposition to the regime. The shortcomings of the new MLVPs lie precisely in their poor party-organizational work: they have not laid the groundwork for socialism by securing mass support, with the result that they have incurred the hostility of the majority in many of these countries. Mongolia and some of the central Asian republics are cited as more appropriate models for the Third World, where the transition to socialism was much more gradual and cautious than in European Russia, owing to the backwardness of their socio-economic systems at the time of the revolution.[40] Like Simoniya, Ulyanovsky criticizes the Afghan communists explicitly: "Four or five years ago some leftist leaders in Afghanistan had proclaimed the existence of a proletarian dictatorship in a country under feudalism, believing that this assertion was an important contribution to scientific socialism."[41]

Scepticism about the viability of MLVPs is even more pronounced in the case of Karen Brutents, who is 20 years younger than the octogenarian Ulyanovsky and likely to inherit overall responsibility for the Third World in the Central Committee when the latter passes from the scene. Brutents does not criticize the MLVPs explicitly, but rather damns them with faint praise and shows a considerably greater interest in the non-Marxist parts of the Third World. A survey of his writings over the past 25 years indicates that he has been consistently sceptical about the ability of Third World states to make a successful transition to socialism, and never seems to have been persuaded that the MLVP would be a meaningful alternative to the first generation bourgeois nationalists. Indeed, it may perhaps be fair to characterize him as a kind of neo-Khrushchevite in his emphasis on the foreign policy potential of the non-communist or non-Marxist states of the Third World, but without Khrushchev's illusions about the likelihood of their eventual conversion

[39] R. Ulyanovsky, "O revolyutsionnoy demokratii, ee gosudarstve i politicheskoy sisteme, "*Voprosy Filosofii*, No. 4, April 1984, pp. 27–28 (hereafter Ulyanovsky 1984 II).

[40] Ulyanovsky (1984, II, pp. 28–29) notes that the Bukhara and Khorezm Soviet people's republics were not admitted into the USSR upon its foundation in 1922 because there is no "automaticity" in the transition from revolutionary-democratic to socialist state power.

[41] Ulyanovsky (1984, I) p. 19. Note that this criticism applies equally to the Percham faction headed by Babrak Karmal as it does to the Khalq faction of Hafizullah Amin, which since the Soviet invasion has been attacked in the Soviet press quite regularly.

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to orthodox communism.[42] For example, in a February 1982 *Pravda* article Brutents makes a nod towards the socialist-oriented countries, but then quickly notes that under modern conditions "the position and role of a country in the world arena are determined not only by the socio-economic forms which hold sway" (i.e. by whether or not the regime is Marxist), but by other factors as well, particularly its attitude towards imperialism.[43] Brutents' focus then shifts quickly to "the solid base for the Soviet Union's cooperation with those liberated countries where capitalist relations are developing but which pursue a policy of defending and strengthening national sovereignty in politics and economics." Rather than attacking the shortcomings of these capitalist-oriented countries, he takes note of the many "contradictions" that exist between them and the imperialist states. He points to the Soviet Union's growing cooperation with countries like India, Brazil, and Mexico, suggesting that it is they and not the socialist-oriented states ruled by MLVPs that will provide more fertile ground for Soviet policy. These themes are taken even further in a 1984 article in which Brutents defends the anti-imperialist posture and credentials of a number of capitalist-oriented Third World states.[44] Brutents again points out the "contradictions" that exist between these countries and imperialism, and states that "As long as it does not reach the monopolistic stage, even the development of capitalist relations in the liberated countries does not nullify [these contradictions] and does not directly contribute to consolidating the positions of imperialism." It is not coincidental that in 1984 he gave a highly positive evaluation to the 1955 Bandung Non-Aligned Conference, which inspired Khrushchev's turn away from narrow emphasis on communist parties.[45]

The final and in some ways most important source of scepticism about the MLVP came from the late General Secretary Yurii Andropov himself, who in his June 1983 Plenum speech echoed the line of many Soviet Third World theoreticians when he said: "It is one thing to proclaim socialism as one's aim and quite another to build it. For this, a certain level of productive forces, culture, and social consciousness are needed." While sympathizing with the states of a socialist orientation, he noted "the complexity of their position and the difficulties of their revolutionary development"[46]—common Soviet euphemisms for their poor performance on both a political and economic level. This and other statements by Andropov in the past suggest a consistent unhappiness with

[42] In contrast to Ulyanovsky, Brutents has never written directly on the socialist-oriented states, concerning himself instead in recent years with such varied topics as the Falklands crisis and the Non-Aligned Movement. See "Konflikt v yuzhnoy atlantike: nekotoriye posledstviya i uroki," *SShA: Ekonomika, Politika, Ideologiya*, No. 11, Nov. 1982; and "Dvizheniye neprisoedineniya v sovremennom mire," *MEiMO*, No. 5, 1984 (hereafter Brutents 1984 I).

[43] Karen Brutents, "Sovietskii Soyuz i osvobodivshiesya strany; voprosy teorii." *Pravda*, 2 Feb. 1982.

[44] Karen Brutents, "Osvobodivshiesya strany v nachale 80-kh godov," *Kommunist*, No. 3, Feb. 1984 (hereafter Brutents 1984 II).

[45] Brutents (1984 I).

[46] "Rech Generalnogo Sekretariya Ts. K. KPSS tovarishcha Yu. V. Andropova," *Kommunist*, No. 9, June 1983.

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the sort of activist Third World policy that characterized the late Brezhnev years in general and disillusionment with the socialist-oriented countries in particular.

Ultimately, however, it will be Mikhail Gorbachov and other Soviet leaders at his level who will decide the future of Soviet Third World policy. At present we have only a very vague idea of what Gorbachov's inclinations are with respect to Third World policy. Given his background as an economic manager, there is some reason to suspect that he is a follower of Andropov in this as in other areas of policy. Gorbachov's early pronouncements, while very sketchy on Third World questions, tend to confirm this conclusion. For example, in his first speech as General Secretary he stated:

> The Soviet Union has always supported the struggle of the peoples for liberation from the colonial yoke and today, too, *our sympathies* are on the side of the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America that are following the path of strengthening their independence and social renewal.[47]

Gorbachov made no concrete offers of support for allies in the Third World, nor did he choose to emphasize the countries of a socialist orientation as being particularly close to the Soviet Union. We will probably discover his own predilections in greater detail from his report to the 27th Party Congress in February 1986.

FROM the record of both Soviet theory and behaviour over the past three decades, it is evident that questions of ideology and political organization have been critical factors determining the basic course of Soviet Third World policy. The Marxist–Leninist Vanguard Party played a particularly important role in the late Brezhnev period; it would be impossible to assert that ideology was irrelevant to Soviet concerns.

It is also clear that Soviet interest in MLVPs does not stem from any kind of communist messianism, but arises because the MLVP is regarded as a tool for furthering the state interests of the USSR, which are dictated in large measure by *Realpolitik* concerns. The MLVP was never a universally applicable instrument; like any other tool, its utility depended on the circumstances of time and place, and in regions or countries where it was not viable, it was either discarded or not used in the first place. Hence, the Soviets maintained relations with a variety of bourgeois nationalists in India, Syria, Algeria, and the like, while simultaneously cultivating the likes of Angola and Afghanistan.

At the same time, we should not underestimate the value to the Soviets of MLVPs as ends in themselves rather than as mere policy instruments. The constant theme of Boris Ponomarev's speeches throughout the past two decades has been how each passing year shows us the ever-increasing vigour and dynamism of socialism, its superiority over capitalism as a

[47] Italics added, "Speech by Comrade Gorbachov, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, at the CPSU Central Committee Plenum on 11 March," *Pravda*, 12 March 1985.

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social and economic system. It is likely that the only place where this sort of thing is still taken seriously is in certain parts of the Third World, and the proliferation of Marxist–Leninist regimes in the developing world during the late 1970s had a reassuring effect on many in the USSR.

Reading recent Soviet writings on MLVPs, one comes away with the distinct impression that most Soviet theorists are at something of a loss as to appropriate future directions for Soviet strategy in the Third World. Cultivation of first generation bourgeois nationalists had its drawbacks and limitations, but the self-proclaimed Marxist–Leninists whom many in the USSR saw as an alternative in the early to mid-1970s have proved even weaker in certain key respects. Most Soviet writers only go so far as to point out the shortcomings of the second generation, without offering up suggestions for their replacement. The one major theorist who seems to have a clear idea of future directions for policy is Karen Brutents, who has openly advocated what amounts to a return to a Khrushchevian policy of emphasis on the non-communist Third World.

But Brutents' published views do not constitute Soviet policy. There is some reason to think that the future role of the MLVP, as well as other broad questions such as the overall level of resource allocations to Third World clients, has been under debate in high Moscow political circles over at least the past three or four years.[48] That is, the debate has gone beyond the level of academic and International Department theorists and has reached the level of Politburo and Central Committee Secretariat leaders. The resolution of this debate has probably been somewhat complicated by the ongoing succession uncertainties of the early 1980s, with no single general secretary remaining healthy or in office long enough to focus clearly on Third World issues. While we have some idea of the terms of this debate, written sources do not indicate clearly whether and how it has been resolved. For that we have to look at behaviour.

A case can be made that in the early 1980s the Soviet Union began to move away from promotion of MLVPs back to a Brutents-like strategy of building ties with large, geopolitically important Third World states. Soviet military assistance to a number of second generation clients, including Ethiopia, the PDRY, and Mozambique, has either remained flat or fallen slightly, while the rate of increase for established socialist allies like Cuba and Vietnam has fallen. This has occurred at a time when Moscow has substantially increased both the quantity and quality of its aid to Syria, India, and Iraq, and has initiated large economic agreements with Morocco, Argentina, and India. Some observers have cited Mozambique as a recent case of Soviet retrenchment. The Marxist–Leninist Frelimo regime was a charter member of the second generation, but since 1981 has been allowed to slip further and further into the South African orbit, culminating in the March 1984 Nkomati agreement

[48] For evidence of this, see Stephen Sestanovich. "Do the Soviets Feel Pinched by Third World Adventures?" *Washington Post*, 20 May 1984, and my own study, *Moscow's Post-Brezhnev Reassessment of the Third World* (The Rand Corporation, Santa Monica, R-3337-USDP, 1986).

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whereby Pretoria and Maputo pledged non-interference in each other's internal affairs. Finally, Soviet policy may be more remarkable for what has not happened: there has been no large-scale Soviet intervention in the Third World since the invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979.

The problem is that these trends have not been consistent. At the same time that Mozambique was moving closer to South Africa, the Soviets negotiated a long-term, multi-billion dollar package of economic and military assistance to its other Marxist–Leninist client in southern Africa, Angola.[49] From a low of perhaps 17,000, the number of Cuban troops in Angola had increased to 30–35,000 by the end of 1984, and in the summer of 1985 MPLA forces, assisted by both Cuban and Soviet military advisors, undertook an ambitious offensive against Jonas Savimbi's UNITA.[50] The Soviets increased both the level of their "assistance" to Afghanistan and the scope of military operations in 1984 and '85, dramatically upped their commitments to Nicaragua, and for the first time in many years shipped modern tactical aircraft to North Korea.

The absence of large-scale Soviet interventions on behalf of Marxist–Leninist groups in the Third World during the 1980s is very difficult to interpret. While it may be the result of a deliberate policy choice, it may also simply reflect the absence of appropriate opportunities. As many Soviet observers have pointed out, Portugal's was the last of the European colonial empires to fall apart, and the era of easy gains from support of national liberation movements is now over. The only obvious opportunity to support a Marxist–Leninist group in the early 1980s was the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front in El Salvador. Whatever "restraint" the Soviets have shown towards the FMLN is undoubtedly due to fear of unduly provoking Western opinion, rather than a decision in principle to move away from MLVPs.

The case of Angola demonstrates that it would in any case be difficult for the Soviets to re-orient their policy even if there was a consensus within the leadership to do so. As a result of its highly visible interventions in the mid to late-1970s, the Soviet Union has invested considerable amounts of money and prestige in the success of its new clients, and it cannot be seen to be backing away from them now that several of these enterprises have gone sour. The clearest instance of the bind the Soviets are now in is Afghanistan, where Soviet recognition of the mistakes of the Afghan communists does not present them with a clear picture of how to settle the war through either military or political means. It may be that a major shift towards a Brutents-like policy would be virtually invisible to outside observers. Just as in the heyday of the MLVP Moscow did not jettison viable bourgeois nationalists of the Khrushchev period, so there is unlikely to be a dramatic move away from the second generation clients. The most important manifestation of a new policy might be one quite beneficial to the West, a decreased willingness to seize opportunities to intervene on behalf of small Marxist–Leninist groups hoping to come to power in the future.

[49] US Department of Defense, *Soviet Military Power* (USGPO, 1984), p. 119.
[50] Alan Cowell, "Enemy Blocked, Angolan Rebel Says," *New York Times*, 9 Oct. 1985.

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Communism as a Cultural Formation

Leszek Kolakowski

THERE is a Polish joke about a little girl who is told at school to write an essay on the following subject: "Why I love the Soviet Union." Uncertain of the answer, she asks her mother: "Mummy, why do I love the Soviet Union?" "What do you mean," cries out her mother, "the Soviets are criminals, nobody loves them, everybody hates them!" She asks her father. "What sort of rubbish are you talking now," he says, growing angry, "they are the oppressors whose troops occupy our country, the whole world loathes them!" Distressed, the girl asks several other adults the same question, but receives the same reply from all of them. In the end she writes: "I love the Soviet Union because nobody else does."

I would like to proceed in more or less the same manner as the girl. I would like, namely, to consider a question which is very rarely contemplated seriously—except in communist propaganda, but even its authors don't take that seriously—communism as a source of cultural inspiration in this century. Anthropologists strive always to use the word "culture" in the neutral sense, having in mind the various systems of social communication: law, tradition, educational institutions, the mechanisms of power, religious belief, art, family relationships, sexual norms, etc. In other words, all can be referred to without any *a priori* assumptions as to whether one form of culture is at a higher or lower level than another. In this sense of the word, Mayakovsky's poems are as much a part of communist culture as the debilitating jargon of a scribe from any provincial propaganda department. So are the classics of Chinese painting and the pictures of Maoist artists, whose quality is still way below that of American comic strips. However, I have in mind "culture" in a much more limited sense of the word, and with a definite hierarchy of values. In other words, culture in the sense of literature, art, and humanistic writing. I am also thinking of works which one can safely assume became part of a culture which lay within the traditional reaches of the Christian religion and which grew from Greek, Roman, Jewish and Christian roots (Russia belongs to that area, even if its politics are closer to the Asian tradition).

Thus my question is as follows: how can we explain the fact that, given certain historical conditions, international communism, as a ruling ideology, and while aspiring to power, has proved so culturally fecund? In other words, how did it prove capable of inspiring works of art which should still be considered part of European civilization and which have at least not been consigned to the rubbish bin, and how did it manage to attract a considerable cross-section of the cultural elite, among them

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individuals of outstanding ability? The question is valid, not because the destructive and anti-cultural activities of communism are known to everyone, but because we have reason to believe that they were evident from the very start. This aspect of communist rule has been widely publicized, so it is not worth repeating here. One can say, however, that communism carried out its culture-slaying function, in contrast to earlier and contemporary tyrannies, not only and not even mainly by negative means such as censorship, repression and suppression of those who refused to submit to its demands. Traditional tyrannies are usually less destructive insofar as they attempt to disallow only political opposition. They destroy a culture only when it directly threatens their authority. In general, such tyrannies set themselves a limited goal of wanting to be indivisible and indestructible, but not necessarily wanting to extend themselves over all spheres of cultural life. They may tolerate cultural expression which is politically harmless or indifferent.

But communism was planned from the beginning as an all-embracing power which sought not only to eliminate every threat to its existence, but also to regulate positively all spheres of collective life: ideology, literature, art, science, private life, and even styles of dress. Although it is immensely difficult to achieve this ideal state of total control, we should not forget the time when there was a powerful drive towards this ideal, and when ideological norms were established for everything: what we should think about the theory of relativity, which styles of music were correct and which unacceptable, and what width trousers satisfied socialist requirements. Communist China achieved the most impressive results in this drive towards total conformity, and not inconsiderable, although by no means as outstanding, results were attained in the Soviet Union during the last years of Stalin. A partial retreat from this ideal was forced by the pressure of reality—for example, the abandoning of ideological merit in the field of natural sciences. Other laws proved too troublesome actually to put into practice, for instance the laws laid down concerning modes of dress. In the majority of the Soviet Union's European protectorates regimentation never advanced nearly so far, not because the principles themselves were abandoned, but because the possibility of imposing them depended on the relative strength of the ruling authorities when confronted by the defensive reactions of the individual societies. In Poland today, as has been the case for a long time, cultural oppression bears more resemblance to the model of a traditional tyranny than to that of a totalitarian regime. The ruling authorities rely on negative means of control—censorship, repression of the opposition and non-conformists—and do not attempt, or at least if they do, try clumsily and ineffectively, to impose ideological norms of cultural merit. One does not need to add that this is more a consequence of their weakness and instability than the result of any noble intentions.

HOWEVER, this is not the object of my study; I am concerned with communism as a culturally active force. That it was such a force

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would seem to me to be difficult to deny. Talented writers like Mayakovsky, Yesenin, Babel, Pilnyak, Fadeyev, and Ehrenburg, outstanding film directors such as Eisenstein and Pudovkin, avant-garde painters such as Malevich, Dejneka, Rodchenko, and for a short while even Chagall—all of them identified themselves ideologically with the Bolshevik revolution of 1917. We know that the fates of this quite sizable body of artists were various: some killed themselves, others were killed by executioners, a few prostituted their talents to the new tyrant or ended their days embittered and artistically inactive. For many Western intellectuals in the 1920s, among them the literary and artistic avant-garde, communism proved a tremendously magnetic force. Aragon, Eluard and Picasso were Communist Party members all their lives, as were many other undoubtedly distinguished individuals from France, Italy and Germany. Even in countries where communism failed to establish itself as a political force to be reckoned with, such as the USA or Great Britain, the number of intellectuals, writers and artists who were, if not CP members, then Trotskyite or Stalinist sympathizers, was quite impressive. In inter-war Poland, where the communists' political influence was marginal (although more noticeable in the trade union movement), and where they were naturally handicapped by their association with a country which was historically an enemy, communism still managed to attract a certain number of genuine artists: Broniewski, Jasienski, Wandurski, Wat, Zegadlowicz, and Kruczkowski, or intellectuals like Stefan Czarnowski (in the later years of his life), Nowakowski, and Natalia Gasiorowska. We know also that in the first decade after the Second World War the communist government drew on the support of a considerable number of writers and artists, many of them outstanding. The same was true in Czechoslovakia and Hungary.

I could go on multiplying the examples and the names, and the list would be very long indeed. It is an indisputable fact, however, that in certain historical conditions, communism acted not only as a powerful gravitational force for many artists, but actually inspired many works of art which had a major impact on the artistic and intellectual life of this century. Thus it existed as a separate form of civilization which devastated and still attempts to destroy Europe's cultural heritage; it also led to the death of religious expression, which it succeeded in ousting.

The least credible, and most naive way of explaining these historical events is by making generalizations of the following type: "People are easily deceived, easily corrupted or intimidated, and this is the secret of communism's success." Using such a formula to dismiss the history of communism is as simple as it is futile, even counter-productive, because it makes a true understanding of important historical processes impossible. Such explanations have the advantage that they can be applied to everything we find hard to accept, or which fills us with indignation, but their all-revealing strength betrays their essential sterility. No, the history of communism is not so easily accounted for. These were social processes which should be treated as such and not as the dubious machinations of

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individuals. Even if one were to dispose of the problem quite so simply, it would not explain why the communist governments of today, although still adopting all manner of means to deceive, corrupt and intimidate, have lost not only their ability to stimulate artistic and intellectual creativity, but also the power to win over the cultural elites inside and outside of their empire. How is it that Stalin was capable of building up considerable support amongst intellectuals, when the present regimes, although less blood-thirsty and brutal, have proved incapable of doing so? Why do other revolutionary and despotic regimes lack this ability? Why did fascism and Hitlerism, also whole-sale destroyers of culture, leave nothing in their wake except ruins? Why was it that fascism, although arousing the sympathy of a few Western artists—Heidegger, Ezra Pound, Céline, and Knut Hamsun to name the best-known—proved to be so much weaker in this respect when compared with Stalinism?

In only one important discipline did communism prove completely barren, and that is philosophy. Official Soviet philosophy has left nothing noteworthy in its wake and its history can be studied only as an example of the inevitable debasing of the intellect when it is reduced to being a servile instrument of the Party. Lukács and Bloch, two interesting thinkers who are still worthy of attention, are only partial exceptions to this general rule. Lukács is worth reading if only as a rather unusual example of an outstanding thinker who, throughout his life, despite various conflicts and disagreements, devoted his intellectual powers to the service of a tyrant, and whose books provide no food for thought and are considered "things of the past" even in Hungary, his native country. The most important components of Bloch's thought have little or almost nothing in common with either Marxism or communism. Similarly, in Poland and Czechoslovakia philosophy in the spirit of communism is simply an intellectual rubbish-heap. Of course, even rubbish-heaps provide some interest, but only to archaeologists.

COMMUNISM has a centuries-old historical precedent. Even in its earliest guise—in the utopian literature of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment (often inspired by the religious concept of an apostolic Commonwealth which branded private property a sin)—it betrayed its incurable contradictions: these utopias were at one and the same time egalitarian and despotic. They propagated the ideal of perfect equality, but also the necessity of an enlightened elite to safeguard this equality. Communism, which took the form not only of a literary genre, but also that of a political movement, hailed from the Jacobin Left which was to an even greater extent a product of this contradiction between equality, considered supreme and absolute, and freedom. The ideal society was to have been at the same time strictly egalitarian and yet governed despotically—a contradiction in terms. The nineteenth century, however, which witnessed the birth and growth of the modern socialist movement, the century of Marx, hardly provided fertile soil for communism. Socialism did have its individual theoretical disciplines at that time, but it

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scarcely existed as a political movement. It was never in control of the First International; Marx, despite his theoretical authority, hardly counted as a political activist, and the socialist parties of the Second International, although constantly divided into factions and at loggerheads with one another, were in their overwhelming majority advocates of legalism and believers in cultural freedom. Criticism of social conditions was well advanced in the nineteenth century, but again this had little to do with communism. Modern communism in the true sense of the word was born at the beginning of the twentieth century in the shape of Lenin's faction. The influence it exerted within the socialist movement outside Russia in the years leading up to the war was practically non-existent, and the fact that it was a completely new phenomenon, not just identifiable with one or other of the tactical and doctrinal factions within the movement, went unheeded for a long time and only became apparent after 1910. The movement made no secret of its embryonic despotism, and its totalitarian potential was present at birth. If it managed to harness the revolutionary wave in Russia and to establish itself as the vanguard, then this was due to an exceptional combination of chance historical occurrences. But it was not just these coincidences which brought the Bolsheviks to the fore—it was their ability, which later, in a more sophisticated form, became the keystone of Soviet success, to absorb and assimilate all major social grievances and turn them to their advantage. Or to put it differently: from the very beginning, ideologically as well as tactically, communism was a parasite. It efficiently exploited all social ills, all the most elemental, vital, worthy causes which were the concern of a large body of the intelligentsia, nurtured as they were on the ideals of enlightenment and humanism. Communists before the First World War not only defended workers' interests, but also exposed national oppression and cashed in on the aspirations of poor peasants. They protested against censorship and, in a non-doctrinaire fashion, brought all potential opponents of the Tsar under their own aegis and channelled them in one direction. They had practically no rule in the February revolution or the overthrow of the Tsar, and the October revolution took place under slogans which had nothing communist about them whatsoever, e.g. "Peace" and "Land to the Peasants." Anarchy, which was expressed in the call for self-governing councils, was the main ideology of the revolution, not communism. This platform was hi-jacked by the Bolsheviks, then rejected by them when it became apparent that the councils were in their vast majority Menshevik, and later still re-adopted in an attempt to exploit the anarchist flood in order to smash the still-existing government structures and to impose their own—Bolshevik—authority on a demoralized and disorganized society. Lenin himself openly admitted that the adoption of the Socialist Revolutionaries' agrarian programme had brought the Bolsheviks to victory. The third slogan, along with "Peace" and "Land to the Peasants," vital for the disintegration of the former state, called for the right to self-determination. We all know the

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fate of this programme. "Land to the Peasants" was in fact realized by mass-expropriation and peasants were chained to the land on principles not dissimilar to those of feudal servitude; the promise of "Peace" was enacted by the forging of the most militarized empire on earth, insatiable in its ruthlessness and greed; and "self-determination," by the systematic strangling of all national aspirations and traditions.

Many intellectuals, however, reacted to Bolshevism not as a collection of policies with which to alleviate severe social injustices, but rather as a global, utopian technology, the heralding of a new world, a new era in which all human problems would be solved once and for all, all misery eradicated. The problems of peace and war were particularly acute and so too was the issue of internationalism with which they were associated. World communism as we know it today is the product of the First World War. We Poles have a natural tendency to see the war in terms of one of the greatest events in our history, the re-emergence of an independent Polish state after years of subjugation. However, none of the powers which launched the war had this outcome in mind as one of their war-aims. The war in fact resulted in the brutal slaughter of millions, and the longer it lasted the more it became clear, as the left-wing socialists had always claimed, that this was an imperialist war, the sacrifice of innocent people on behalf of the ruling elite. One cannot overemphasize the role of anti-war feeling in the sympathies of European intellectuals for Bolshevism during the early 1920s. The Bolsheviks reaped the harvest from the compromise of the Second International in 1914 when it became clear that international workers' solidarity, the idealist backbone of the socialist movement, was an empty slogan which disappeared without trace after its first trial of strength. The USDP, the German social-democratic anti-war faction set up in 1917, was the egg from which communism hatched, and for the European writers who later joined communist parties or lent them their support—like Arnold Zweig, Bertolt Brecht, Henri Barbusse, Romain Rolland, Anatole France, Jaroslav Hašek, to name the best-known—the horror of war was their main motivation. Communism was the promise of a world without wars. It effectively exploited the human desire for peace which has become one of the most powerful social emotions of this century. Before the war, the communists were little more than a minor sect. During the period of the first and second Russian revolutions the influence of Marxism and communism went sharply into decline among intellectuals, and many outstanding individuals launched violent attacks on the historical dogma with which not long before they had identified. Not without cause did Maxim Gorky, by then an unreserved devotee of Stalinism, describe the years 1907–17 at the 1934 Writers' Congress, as the most disgraceful and shameful decade in the history of the Russian intelligentsia.

But other motives played their part. Often among intellectuals there was a fascination with this barbarianism which heralded the absolute beginning of a new era, a clean break with the past, freedom from the shackles of a bygone age. In Russia, as in the West, this ethos of—one

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hardly need add, illusory—cultural liberation from their traditional heritage, the cult of uninhibited youth, the desire to shock and scandalize the bourgeois public, all these were reasons why many intellectuals gave their sympathy to the Bolsheviks as harbingers of radical contemporaneity, as the hammer with which to shatter the chains of an onerous past. With artists such as Blok, Mayakovsky, the French Surrealists and the Futurists, these motives were extremely important. And perhaps the historical reality of the time explains their presence as part of communism's magnetic attraction. The First World War was indeed the conclusion of the nineteenth century, and the beginning of a new epoch in all areas of human experience. The Bolsheviks appreciated this more profoundly and sooner than most, and managed for some time to encroach on European culture as the embodiment of this new epoch. For these reasons, communist civilization derived a certain, albeit short-lived, credibility.

THE first half of the 1930s gave rise to new social upheavals which the communists also succeeded in exploiting: the Great Depression, the triumph of National Socialism in Germany, the Spanish Civil War, and the turbulent events in China. These were all burning, tragic issues. The Great Depression, with its millions of unemployed, its misery and despair, was a perfect opportunity for the communists to present themselves as the promise of a world without unemployment and insecurity, and as the most energetic enemy of the fascist cancer which seemed to have devoured the whole of Europe. During these years, when millions perished in the Ukraine after the Soviet government's artificially induced famine, or died from cold, torture, exhaustion and execution in Stalin's jails and camps, or during the various stages of transportation, the Soviet regime, in the eyes of a considerable and growing body of Western intellectuals, towered as a bastion of peace, as the focus for revolutionary humanism, and as the harbinger of a new society in which people would be free from unemployment and insecurity, equal and confident of their future. André Malraux, Walter Benjamin, Theodore Plivier, Jean-Richard Bloch, Theodore Dreiser, John Dos Passos, and Upton Sinclair identified themselves with communism or were its sympathizers. Lion Feuchtwanger and Romain Rolland greeted the macabre farce of the Moscow Trials as the work of a supreme justice. Again in this case, it is not enough just to bemoan the facts of human naivety and short-sightedness. Here too, we are dealing with social and cultural processes which demand explanation. The Popular Front in the 1930s was of course a form of Soviet manipulation, but it was not just a form of manipulation. If it had any effect, that was because it mirrored the real hopes, fears and experiences of Europe. Fascism was not a communist-invented bogeyman, but a very real and tangible threat to civilizations and nations; and although the fascists also fed off the same social diseases, their adherents were of a totally different ilk, and their cultural vitality was practically non-existent. The ambiguous and at times

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timid policy of the Western powers in the face of this threat was skilfully exploited by the communists: anti-fascism could have been, and indeed was, a culturally inspiring force. The social upheavals resulting from inflation and the Depression were very real. The two-year Molotov-Ribbentrop pact shocked many, to be sure, but the later course of the war speedily erased this rather embarrassing memory and from 1942–45 the Soviet colossus once again posed as main protector of the world from Hitler's barbarians, and exploited its military successes for another ideological invasion of Europe.

One can make a similar analogy concerning the Polish cultural elite. Those who unequivocally supported the communist regime after the war had more often than not emerged not from communist, but from socialist or liberal-socialist backgrounds. Their transfer of allegiance was to a considerable degree determined by their repugnance for pre-war Poland, especially after the death of Marshal Pilsudski. Nowadays, we have an understandable tendency to idealize this period as a time when, despite its many sins, Poland was at least independent: its weaknesses and failings were insignificant when compared to those of the present "progressive" regime. Press restrictions and censorship were minimal in comparison with the systematically destructive activities of the present-day muzzle with which Polish culture has been struggling for so long. Those pre-war acts of police illegality pale when compared to the lawlessness which prevails in the People's Republic of Poland. Nevertheless, that body of the intelligentsia which in 1945 or 1946, after the horror of war and occupation, identified itself to a greater or lesser extent with the new, post-war regime, viewed things differently. Those who remembered the physical and legal mishandling of the opposition leaders in the Brest affair, the Bereza concentration camp, and the ugly wave of virulent anti-semitism and obsessive clericalism, saw in communism the legitimate successor to a more enlightened Polish tradition which was opposed to chauvinism and clericalism, which it regarded as poisonous and misguided. Similarly, the proclaimed social reforms reflected the long-traditional demand of the non-communist Left in Poland. To assert this is not to excuse it, and I certainly do not intend to justify the participation of these intellectuals in the massive communist lie. Communism, however, and I'll repeat this banal observation, is an historical phenomenon of immense importance and cannot be explained by expressions of condemnation and astonishment at the gullibility and corruptibility of its followers. It successfully exploited genuine social grievances which were the preoccupation of both European liberals and socialists. This does not mean the communists have in any way, or even partially, resolved these problems. On the contrary, virtually all their efforts to solve the social, cultural, national, and international issues which they once championed have ended in disaster. The only dubious exception, and one on which the Soviets pride themselves endlessly as their greatest achievement, is the question of unemployment. I say dubious because unemployment in the Soviet Union has been eliminated

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thanks to a system of compulsory employment. In similar fashion, there was never any unemployment among slaves. Even Hitler successfully fought the plague of unemployment. Nevertheless, this issue remains a vexing problem and a very real thorn in the heel of democratic societies. In conditions under which unemployment reaches epidemic proportions, the promise of communism begins to look attractive, and the possibility that people will be prepared to exchange their freedom for a slave-like security cannot be ignored.

COMMUNISM was a gigantic façade concealing the ruthless drive for power, for total power as an end in itself. The rest was merely tactics, the means by which power was to be secured, and a few additional necessary evils. But this façade was no ordinary decorative deception. It was communism's only means of survival. It was its respiratory system, the cultural residue from a long tradition of enlightenment and nineteenth-century socialism of which communism was quite obviously a deformed descendant. Various strains of inherited thought, deformed as they might be, are immediately evident in communism. Rationalism was one such product of the Enlightenment. Under communism, this contempt for tradition, and hatred for the mythological, took the form of the brutal persecution of religion. It also found expression in the principle, practised rather than preached, whereby human beings were completely expendable, their individual lives counting only as instruments of the "larger whole," i.e. the state. According to this principle, there is no other rational basis on which to attribute any kind of special and non-instrumental status to them. Rationalism was transformed under communism into a concept of slavery. Furthermore, the romantic and early-socialist strain—the search for a lost Commonwealth and human solidarity, the protest against social dislocation caused by the industrial revolution and urbanization—took the form of pure caricature under communism: the principle of solidarity was one of solidarity imposed by force, an attempt to create a fraudulent and deceptive unity, the unity of despotism.

Nevertheless, these rationalist and Promethean phrases, along with the solidarist jargon, were strongly accented in communist propaganda from the start and testified to common, albeit deformed, links with the Enlightenment and Romanticism. It gave communist ideology a particular pathos, which being authentic in the minds of its adherents, appeared as a semblance of truth. In the period of ideological disintegration, this circumstance proved as much a weakness as a strength. The cultural façade, depending on the degree to which it was taken seriously by the movement itself, had an incurable tendency to distance itself and question its own purely servile role. To take the cultural façade seriously, one had constantly to confront it with the reality of the political movement, or the state. Thanks to this, communism could, and was even forced to, produce its own internal critics, heretics and apostates who appealed to the original texts, ever-present in the

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ideological jargon, and who unmasked the poverty of reality. We hardly see this phenomenon existing in other totalitarian movements, where the hiatus between the façade and reality was small—the ideology more often than not brutally made public its real intentions—and the ideological tradition was frail. Hitler could have been Stalin's equivalent, only there was no Nazi Marx or Engels, not even a Lenin, to back him up. He replaced them with an artificial genealogy.

Thus the communists, to use their own jargon vis-à-vis the bourgeoisie, were constantly forced to produce their own grave-diggers. In the intellectual and moral criticism which eventually led communism to its ideological bankruptcy, the most important and effective role was played, as we know, by former communists and left-wing socialists, people who were not only well-acquainted with its political mechanisms and psychology, but who had also "internalized" the experience to such an extent that they found it difficult to find a substitute. Arthur Koestler, Ignazio Silone, Boris Souvarine, and Bertram Wolfe were all communists: George Orwell was a left-wing socialist. Starting with Djilas, the role of former communists in the ideological disintegration of the European Peoples' Democracies in the '50s and '60s was significant. In Poland, the names in this category are legion. So too in France.

Here, however, we should make some important distinctions. When we speak of the magnetic qualities of communism as an ideology, and its cultural fecundity, we may have in mind either the work of artists, writers and intellectuals who identified or sympathized with communism, or the art works themselves which bear the distinct hall-mark of communist ideological inspiration. Many outstanding artists associated with communism did not leave behind any work which unambiguously testified to their political sympathies, or only indirect examples. Such works of art quite often deal with causes which communists ostensibly defended, but in their content, betray no communist sympathies, in other words, one did not have to be either a communist or a fellow-traveller to be concerned about such issues. Aragon was undoubtedly an outstanding poet, whose influence on French literature will endure. But perhaps we should make a clear distinction between his poetry and the mendacious Stalinist apologetics, or propagandistic novels. Some of the poetry of Pablo Neruda is distinctly and recognizably communist in content, but from looking at the paintings of Siqeiros, a first-rate artist, one could not guess that he too was a one-hundred-per-cent Stalinist. Dreiser was a communist sympathizer who towards the end of his life joined the Communist Party, but his novels belong to a rich tradition of American social criticism rather than to communist propaganda. In the pre-war poetry of Broniewski, we can easily distinguish the lyrical from the political. But as far as the latter is concerned, the verses are noteworthy because, unlike his post-war eulogies to Stalin they testify to communism's ability to absorb the energies arising from genuine social conflicts, and not just consequences of Soviet imperialism. One could make similar observations about the majority of artists just mentioned.

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ALONGSIDE those who allied themselves politically with communism, there existed (in the past!) artistic, intellectual and literary creativity inspired by the communist ideal which remained in our cultural heritage. But one can say without fear of contradiction, that the longer communists have been in power, the less of this kind of creativity there has been. Works genuinely inspired by the ideal of communism virtually disappear in the Soviet Union during the 1930s. This was not only the result of the purges and executions, but, alas, was due above all to the growth and strengthening of a totalitarian system which left no room for individual expression, substituting instead a regimental agit-prop pap which effectively strangled any remaining authenticity. A certain amount of valuable writing was occasioned by the Second World War, but this was inspired more by patriotism than communism. These were works of art which depicted the horror of the war as seen through the eyes of people who, at gun point, fought for their own lives and for that of their nation, but not for the triumph of the revolution. In Poland and other Soviet protectorates, post-war art inspired by the communist ideal has produced almost nothing of lasting value. Socialist-realism in art and literature was about as fertile as an abortion; besides, artists who made their debut after the war and who took their communist beliefs seriously, moved over to the literature of nationalist revival as soon as they abandoned their earlier beliefs. I admit that this may be a somewhat over-simplistic and slightly crude account which does not take into consideration the various transitional stages, the possible variations, and the art which was ideologically confusing in content. For this, I would have to discuss particular biographies and works in detail. But if there were any exceptions among communist-inspired artists whose artistic merits would be worth taking seriously, they were very quickly overshadowed, and everything culturally valuable existed either in spite of communist ideology or parallel to it, simply by-passing it. However, one should stress that in the case of an ideology which has pretensions to being all-embracing and all-powerful, to create alongside or parallel to it is to create against it. Art which simply ignores ideological doctrine and the authorities is of course tolerated, even to a small degree in the Soviet Union itself. But this is the result of the senility and decrepitude of that ideology, and not of any tribute to liberal values by the ideologues. Internal criticism of communist ideology has practically ceased to exist, and in any case is probably socially superfluous. Communism no longer produces any of its own critics appealing to its own doctrinal assumptions: every critical reflection hits directly its original principles, and not its supposed deformations. Neither in Western Europe, nor in the United States, nor in communist countries, do there remain any artists of any merit who are inspired by the ideal of communism. The collapse has been total and irreversible. Only in Latin America, with its enormous social problems, poverty, backwardness and blatant inequalities, has communism retained something of its former appeal. In the Soviet Union, however, the only ideology which shows any signs of life is

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imperialism rather than communism. Or to put it differently: communism as a specific cultural phenomenon in the sense I'm talking about—i.e. as an energy capable of producing something of long-lasting cultural value—has ceased to exist in the civilized world. Clearly it is still a political and military power capable of terror and conquest, and of mobilizing forces in the Third World. But the communists can no longer act through the intermediary of the intellectual elites.

To say so does not illuminate how communism came into being, and how it managed to survive for so long as the focus of ideological identification for so many people, among them a considerable number of intellectuals. This would require a separate analysis which I do not intend to undertake here. I repeat only this; to explain this process in terms of stupidity or terror is a crude simplification of the problem. We might equally well explain the rise and success of Islam in terms of the stupidity of the Arabs, who instead of believing in Christ chose to believe in the false prophet Mohammed. In any case, I do not think the rise and spread of communism is explicable in the same terms as drought or flood. From a later perspective, all great historical events seem to have been determined by circumstance, and this holds true also for the sudden eruption of religious movements. Of course with hindsight we can always discover the causes, but the fragility of these explanations is that if they really laid bare all the mechanisms of historical change, we would be able to predict them with a reasonable degree of accuracy, and yet we are unable to do this. Communism grew as a quasi-religious movement, i.e. as the ideological expression of the need for ultimate salvation. This need, one can assume, is part-and-parcel of all civilizations, but its existence does not explain why, at certain times and in certain places, it emerges in the form of intense historical convulsions, engulfing enormous numbers of human beings and leading to unexpected and violent upheavals which turn existing orders upside down. Communism is an example of such a convulsion, which grew out of the desperate need for ultimate salvation and a new epoch. It emerged from a tradition of the Enlightenment, and in conditions where traditional beliefs had been abandoned by educated elites it took the inconsistent form of a secular religion. The psychological workings of its advance were similar to those which explained the effectiveness of traditional religions, in the time of their dynamism; the missionary zeal of its militant atheism acted in a similar fashion. However, its doctrinal form was a mere caricature of religion, as communism demanded at the same time blind obedience and a belief that it was a rational interpretation of the world—but it could not be both at the same time. Hovering precariously between these two inconsistent demands, it led to the collapse within its empire of both rationalism and religion. Its ideological bankruptcy was at the same time a defeat for the Enlightenment, of which it was the ultimate, most consistent, and thus most self-destructive, expression.

All this, I repeat, does not explain the genesis of communism, but at best permits an understanding of the authenticity of its original appeal,

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and thus of the reasons why it was possible for it to become a short-lived, if not very influential, catalyst in the cultural life of this century. Why history chose that time and place for the self-destructive potential of the Enlightenment to reveal itself, we do not know. Every powerful and important social movement is in reality a conglomeration of many chance occurrences, among them the economic, political and intellectual conditions of a particular age, as well as the characters and psychology of the individuals. No one may boast of a method to measure all these historical circumstances, and on the basis of such a calculation draw up a theory of historical causation. There is little doubt, however, that this particular convulsion is drawing to a close and the loss of its ability to mobilize culturally active forces is the outstanding symptom of this decline. Communism is becoming more and more simply a question of brute force, but it would be a mistake to say that this is all it ever was. As to what form and speed this inevitable decline will take in the future, we can only consult the fortune-tellers.

Translated by Philip Cavendish

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Rock Counterculture in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union

Pedro Ramet

Any musical innovation is full of danger to the whole State, and ought to be prohibited; when modes of music change, the fundamental laws of the State always change with them.

Plato, *The Republic*, Book IV

The eleventh-century Kievan monk Isaac . . . excoriated the Devil for appearing to him in his cell in the form of a demon playing loudly on flutes and tambourines.

S. Frederick Starr, *Red and Hot: The Fate of Jazz in the Soviet Union, 1917–1980*

There is no such thing as a work of art completely devoid of ideological content . . . Only that which promotes communion between men can be the basis of a work of art.

Gyorgii Plekhanov, *Art and Society*

STUDENTS of political culture are fond of reminding us that the self-perpetuation of systems is contingent upon the successful socialization of the young. Political culture, which has been defined as "the system of empirical beliefs, expressive symbols, and values which defines the [context] in which political action takes place,"[1] is the attitudinal environment in which governments function, and may be supportive or corrosive of authority, or indifferent to it. The superstructure of communist regimes is attuned to the task of moulding a "new communist man and woman," that is, to the task of transforming political culture and instilling specific values and attitudes in the younger generation.[2]

The task of "building communism" signifies that communist regimes see themselves as the managers of programmatic and purposive social change. While there may be some dispute as to whether there is any purposive social change being pursued at all in Poland, Hungary, and

[1] Sidney Verba, "Comparative Political Culture," in Lucian W. Pye and Sidney Verba (eds.), *Political Culture and Political Development* (Princeton, University Press, Princeton, N.J., 1965), p. 513.

[2] Joel J. Schwartz, "The Elusive 'New Soviet Man'," in *Problems of Communism*, Vol. 22, No. 5 (Sept.–Oct. 1983); and Wolfgang Mleczkowski, "In Search of the Forbidden Nation: Opposition by the Young Generation in the GDR," in *Government and Opposition*, Vol. 18, No. 2 (Spring 1983).

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Yugoslavia today, in the abstract the goal culture pursued under communism would embrace both behavioural and attitudinal patterns, and therefore any alternative set of patterns, or alternative culture, would be unwelcome. Archie Brown has argued (in 1977) that changes in culture (both political culture and culture more generally) are likely to be accompanied by changes in social structure.[3] This says nothing about causality, which, presumably, would operate in both directions. But it does underline that neither aesthetic nor attitudinal variables are politically innocent, and the interest demonstrated by Soviet, Bulgarian, Romanian, and other communist regimes in encouraging the development and spread of a common culture and political culture[4] indicates that at least some communist elites operate on that premise.

Differences in levels of toleration for rock music by the various regimes seem to parallel (at least roughly) differences in toleration towards religion, ethnic subcultures, and dissent, and differences in the scope of autonomy allowed to writers and journalists. These differences may be traced, as Korbonski has observed, to the presence and extent of six conditions:

1. alienation of intellectuals and youth;
2. political reforms;
3. economic difficulties;
4. divisions within the Party;
5. contacts with the West;
6. anti-Soviet attitudes.[5]

Rock music is clearly relevant to variables numbers one and five, and arguably also to number six, all of which are variables relevant to political culture and socialization. Thus, rock music may express and articulate the alienation of youth, with the danger that articulation of disaffection will serve to sustain and deepen it. Moreover, rock music overtly promotes contacts with the West: directly, when Western rock groups tour Eastern Europe; indirectly, when indigenous groups sing Western songs and imitate Western styles; and vicariously, through the proliferation of Western rock records and associated paraphernalia from Michael Jackson sweat-shirts to punk fashions. Finally, while there is nothing intrinsically anti-Soviet in rock music—despite the occasional charges to the contrary in the Soviet press—rock music has, empirically, often served as the vehicle for protest, a feature that is scarcely unique to the communist world. The evidence for this statement will be provided later. But by way of an explanation of this phenomenon, there are several aspects that in fact make music in general an ideal vehicle for social

[3] Archie Brown, "Introduction," to Archie Brown and Jack Gray (eds.), *Political Culture and Political Change in Communist States* (Holmes & Meier, New York, 1977), p. 4.

[4] See Stephen White, *Political Culture and Soviet Politics* (St. Martin's Press, New York, 1979), pp. 143–165.

[5] Andrzej Korbonski, "The Pattern and Method of Liberalization," in Carmelo Mesa-Lago and Carl Beck (eds.), *Comparative Socialist Systems: Essays on Politics and Economics* (University of Pittsburgh Center for International Studies, Pittsburgh, 1975), pp. 201–202.

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criticism and political protest, among them: firstly, that music is a kind of esoteric language, whose messages, however clear to the target audience, may be excused as "entertainment" where unsympathetic listeners are concerned; secondly, that music creates a feeling (whether limited or intense) of collective solidarity among concert listeners (Woodstock serving as an obvious example, or the "Armenian Woodstock" at Yerevan, as a less well-known one); and thirdly, that music has long served as a kind of escape valve (as the blues genre exemplifies), with the possibility always existing that an escape valve may be transformed into a beacon for mobilizing opinion.

"COUNTERCULTURE" may be defined broadly or narrowly. Broadly defined, any culture which challenges the Party's official culture, which is premised on the concept of a single, legitimate, general interest, can be seen as a counterculture. More narrowly defined, counterculture could be seen as a set of ideas, orientations, tastes, and assumptions which differ systematically from those of the dominant culture, recognizing that dominant culture is not the same as official culture.[6]

Under the broader definition, one can identify four broad categories of "counterculture," at least within the context of communist politics. These are: political dissent and opposition, including peace movements, feminists, and ecological groups;[7] religious alternatives, insofar as religious organizations propound alternative explanations of the purposes and meaning of social life;[8] criminality and social deviance, chiefly insofar as these represent and further stimulate the desocialization of their practitioners;[9] and foreign culture importations, particularly via the youth.[10] This essay is concerned with a specific aspect of the last of these. What I hope to accomplish here is to clarify how and why rock music constitutes a disruptive factor in East European communist countries, and to suggest some reasons why the tolerance level for such disruption differs from regime to regime.

Music will be treated here as symbolic language, that is, as a medium of communication of given meanings. In some ways music is less precise than a spoken language; in other ways, more so. The nature of the

[6] For a discussion of this point, see Brown, "Introduction," pp. 7–8.

[7] For example, see Pedro Ramet, "Gleichberechtigung der Geschlechter, Parteipolitik und Feminismus in Jugoslawien," in *Osteuropa*, Vol. 33, No. 7 (July 1983); and Pedro Ramet, "Disaffection and Dissent in East Germany," in *World Politics*, Vol. 37, No. 1 (Oct. 1984). Also Jane Leftwich Curry (ed.), *Dissent in Eastern Europe* (Praeger, New York, 1983); and Rudolf L. Tokes (ed.), *Opposition in Eastern Europe* (Macmillan, London, 1979).

[8] See Bohdan R. Bociurkiw and John W. Strong (eds.), *Religion and Atheism in the USSR and Eastern Europe* (Macmillan, London, 1975); Norbert Greinacher and Virgil Elizondo (eds.), *Churches in Socialist Societies of Eastern Europe*, "Concilium: Religion in the Eighties" (Seabury Press, New York, 1982); and Pedro Ramet (ed.), *Religion and Nationalism in Soviet and East European Politics* (Duke University Press, Durham, N.C., 1984).

[9] See Ivan Volgyes (ed.), *Social Deviance in Eastern Europe* (Westview Press, Boulder, Colo., 1978).

[10] This list omits the culture of indigenous ethnic minorities—which may be viewed with hostility and distrust (as in the cases of Bulgaria, Romania, and the Soviet Union), but which could not ordinarily be viewed as "counterculture."

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communication process may in fact differ. But it is communication all the same. As such, music depends on conventions to convey its meanings. These conventions may be specific to a given culture or subculture or group, and those outside the reference group or lacking familiarity with its conventions, will not be able to understand the music except as opaque confusion. To put it another way, those who listen to rock music habitually and those who avoid it necessarily hear rock differently.[11]

IF, as I have argued, rock music (or any other musical genre) has effects other than purely auditory stimulation, these effects must be distinguished from each other. Allowing that music is always mediated through performance, one may itemize the sociological effects as including the following:

1. Emotional effects, which may derive from the music or the lyrics or, usually, both;
2. Psycho-cultural effects; communicating genre-specific meanings which may directly influence a person's outlook on society and life;
3. Socio-cultural effects, stimulating identification with a particular group of people, now perceived as a peer reference group, with a particular experience, and with cultural values conveyed in the lyrics;
4. Political effects, communicating explicit messages through lyrics and reinforcing identification with the perceived political orientations of the peer reference group.[12]

The first mentioned effect, emotion, is sometimes viewed somewhat cavalierly, as if it were a matter of purely personal consequence. Against this, one may recall Meyer's restatement of what he calls the central thesis of the psychological theory of emotions: "emotion or affect is aroused when a tendency to respond is arrested or inhibited."[13] That is to say, according to the psychological theory of emotions, any musical genre has the potential to contribute to, or interfere with, or deflect the basic behavioural norms in a society, including areas of political importance. The fact that Meyer's restatement links emotion with the repression of action rather than with its excitation[14] does not preclude the subsequent stimulation of action through the presence of an emotional state. Indeed, the music of revolutionary France and Nazi Germany stand out as being among the most concerted uses of music for purposes of mobilization.

[11] Derrick F. Wright, "Musical Meaning and its Social Determinants," in *Sociology*, Vol. 9, No. 3 (Sept. 1975), pp. 419–423, 425, 431; Richard A. Peterson, "Taking Popular Music Too Seriously," in *Journal of Popular Culture*, Vol. 4, No. 3 (Winter 1971), p. 592; and Leonard B. Meyer, *Emotion and Meaning in Music* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1956), p. 5.

[12] Two studies which have borne this out are: William S. Fox and James D. Williams, "Political Orientation and Music Preferences among College Students," in *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 38, No. 3 (Autumn 1974); and Karen Beth Mashkin and Thomas J. Volgy, "Socio-Political Attitudes and Musical Preferences," in *Social Science Quarterly*, Vol. 56, No. 3 (Dec. 1975).

[13] Meyer, *Emotion and Meaning in Music*, p. 14.

[14] Contrast with this Thomas Hobbes' definition of anger as "sudden courage"—a definition that equates emotion with the stimulus to action.

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The second effect (the psycho-cultural) is at the same time one of the more central to this study and also the least obvious. Among musicologists and sociologists of music, there are at least three schools of thought: absolutists, who say that music has no meaning beyond its sounds; referentialists, who say that all music refers to some extra-musical reference, that is, that all music is programmatic in some sense or other; and writers like Leonard Meyer and Derrick Wright, who for want of a better term may be called cultural epistemologists who link apprehended meaning to acculturation and believe that music has the capacity to act upon our cognition and to have an impact on behaviour, albeit always as mediated by situation and context, and previous learning.[15] The notion that music can shape character and behaviour, and reinforce cultural and social dispositions is not new. The ancient Greeks carefully tailored the musical education of their elite young, in the belief that certain diatonic systems were character-building. Mediaeval church music[16] and martial music throughout the ages are clear examples of a similar orientation to music, while the young science of music therapy operates on the assumption that music can, at the very least, produce states of relaxation in which the acquisition of new dispositions or new behaviours is simplified. Among contemporary societies, one might mention the United States, where criticism of rock 'n' roll in the 1950s often referred to its alleged behavioural consequences (generally said to include heightened sensuality),[17] or Nepal, where the government's desire to foster Nepalese patriotism has led it to ban most Western music,[18] or Communist China, whose founder wrote in 1942:

> To defeat the enemy we must rely primarily on the army with guns. But this army alone is not enough; we must also have a cultural army . . . [And hence,] in examining the subjective intention of a writer or artist, that is, whether his motive is correct and good, we do not judge by his declarations but by the effect of his actions (mainly his works) on the masses in society.[19]

Music possesses this ability (to produce cultural and political effects) not only through the sounds themselves, which "mean" something,[20] but also through the social context in which the particular genre flourishes. The associations of certain kinds of music with particular social classes, noted by Adorno and by Weber,[21] are one possible indication of the socio-

[15] Meyer, *Emotion and Meaning in Music*, pp. 38–39.

[16] See discussion in Arnold Hauser, *The Social History of Art*, Vol. 1 (Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1952), p. 137 and passim.

[17] James M. Curtis, "Toward a Socio-technological Interpretation of Popular Music in the Electronic Age," in *Technology and Culture*, Vol. 25, No. 1 (Jan. 1984), p. 97.

[18] Robert T. Anderson and Edna M. Mitchell, "The Politics of Music in Nepal," in *Anthropological Quarterly*, Vol. 51, No. 4 (Oct. 1978), esp. p. 252.

[19] Mao Tse-tung [Mao Zedong], "On Literature and Art," in Berel Lang and Forrest Williams (eds.), *Marxism and Art* (David McKay Co., New York, 1972), pp. 108, 116.

[20] Morris R. Cohen, in *A Preface to Logic* (1944), defines meaning as reference to something beyond the referent itself. See citation in Meyer, *Emotion and Meaning in Music*, p. 34.

[21] Theodor W. Adorno, *Introduction to the Sociology of Music*, trans. by E. B. Ashton (Seabury Press, New York, 1976), pp. 58–62; and William Weber, *Music and the Middle Class: The Social Structure of Concert Life in London, Paris and Vienna* (Holmes & Meier, New York, 1975), pp. 1–15.

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cultural dimension of music. Music as a social experience may of course have effects quite independent of the tonal properties of the music itself. Weber found, for instance, that the prominence of women in the nineteenth-century European musical science reflected social restlessness among upper-class women and "prefigured" the suffragist movement of the later nineteenth century.[22]

Finally, the fourth effect (political) depends on explicit (or perceived) messages in the lyrics and includes reinforcement of political attitudes through reference to the peer group. Research by Fox and Williams[23] found that there was a statistically significant correlation between musical preferences and political orientations in their sample group, and specifically, that politically more conservative persons (American college students in their sample) were less interested in rock music than others of more liberal outlooks. A more recent study by Mashkin and Volgy confirmed these findings, and looked at possible explanations for the correlation. They identified four plausible explanations:

> 1. The "selective reinforcement" hypothesis: These relationships exist because students seek out music containing those lyrics which reflect their attitudes towards politics and social life. . . .
> 2. The "symbolic" hypothesis: The relationship between musical categories and attitudes exists because students who identify themselves with certain types of music do so for symbolic reasons; for example, students who are conservative politically or socially perceive country-and-western music as conservative, and therefore express an affinity for this genre.
> 3. The "causation" hypothesis: Students will expose themselves to types of music for reasons which may have nothing to do with the lyrical content of music (for example, peer influence); however, continuous exposure to certain patterns of messages in the lyrics leads to the acquisition of new attitudes.
> 4. The "two-way flow" hypothesis: Students may expose themselves to music which—in terms of lyrics—is consistent with their attitudes. However, their affective orientation to certain types of music (for example, rock) or artists (for example, The Rolling Stones) is strong enough for them to continue listening to "their music" even when such music is undergoing substantial change. Prolonged exposure to the "new messages" will have an impact on attitudes in one of two ways: (a) either new attitudes—consistent with the new messages—will be acquired, or (b) the new messages will no longer reinforce existing attitudes.[24]

In their testing, Mashkin and Volgy were able to rule out hypotheses 1 and 2, coming to the conclusion that the actual state of affairs represents a mixture of the accounts given in hypotheses 3 and 4.

[22] Weber, *Music and the Middle Class*, pp. 35–36.
[23] Fox and Williams, "Political Orientation and Music Preferences," pp. 362–371.
[24] Mashkin and Volgy, "Socio-Political Attitudes and Musical Preferences," pp. 455–456.

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MUSIC has always lain within the sphere of the politically relevant, for communist regimes. When the Bolsheviks first seized power, they were convinced that it would be necessary to create "a totally new culture, one that would eventually permeate every aspect of life and art."[25] Symptomatic of this orientation were the establishment in 1923 of the Association of Proletarian Musicians, for the purpose of spawning ideologically approved music, and the activity of the Blue Blouse movement between 1925 and 1929, which, under director Boris Yuzhanin, took Party views on events and issues of the day and set them to dance and song.[26]

Soviet wariness of popular music began with the foxtrot, which, like jazz, was seen as a "capitalist fifth column" aimed at subverting the forces of progress. The Soviets changed their minds, however, when the Nazis condemned the genre. If the Nazis hated it, perhaps it was not so bad after all; and besides, they were starting to develop a liking for jazz. The emergence of rock 'n' roll in the 1950s confronted the Soviets, and now also their East European allied regimes, with a new challenge. The Soviets feared that the overt overtones of rebellion in rock 'n' roll could have deleterious effects on the political consciousness of the young, and rock music was banned. "When the Beatles craze hit Russia in the mid-'60s, efforts to reinforce the ban were strengthened."[27] This proved untenable. A constant refrain—repeated by Soviet Politburo member Konstantin Chernenko in June 1983—has been that through Western rock, "the enemy is trying to exploit youthful psychology."[28] The root of the problem is that Western rock seems, in communist eyes at any rate, to encourage withdrawal from social engagement to a focus on personal feelings; the glorification of the West; the infiltration of political scepticism, if not outright dissidence; the introduction of cultural standards, fashions, and behavioural syndromes which are independent of Party control; and a general numbness, which is thought to foster political indifference and passivity.

The focus on personal feelings, encouraged by songs about "feeling good" and "doing your own thing," is clearly unwelcome to the more strident regimes in Czechoslovakia, Romania, Bulgaria, and the USSR. Curtis notes that in the process of obsolescing big bands, rock 'n' roll encouraged "a new sense of the singer as an individual," a sentiment that after 1964 would grow into adulation of specific rock figures. This symbolic individualism also has its psychological counterpart in the stimulation of narcissism noted by Curtis.[29] The Prague newspaper *Tribuna* commented, in this vein, that "individualization of life as a programme does not have anything in common with a socialist way of life.

[25] S. Frederic Starr, *Red and Hot: The Fate of Jazz in the Soviet Union, 1917–1980* (Oxford University Press, New York, 1983), p. 5.
[26] Ibid. pp. 49, 61–62.
[27] Ibid. p. 295.
[28] Quoted in *Christian Science Monitor* (5 Aug. 1983), p. 3. See also *Komsomolskaya Pravda* (16 Sept. 1984), p. 4; and *Soviet Analyst*; Vol. 13, No. 15 (25 July 1984), p. 3.
[29] Curtis, pp. 94, 96–97.

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It is motivated by old egotism; it is accompanied by *petit bourgeois* mentality."[30] Similarly, *Sovetskaya Kultura* attacked rock idol Michael Jackson, in June 1984, for being "apolitical in the extreme, a vegetarian, sentimental, and a religious believer,"[31] while *Literaturnaya Gazeta* blasted Donna Summer for singing songs full of "vulgar sexual shrieks," describing her as a "marionette" of the "ideological masters" of the US.[32] The Soviets' refusal to issue a visa to Boy George in mid-1984 probably reflected a related concern, that Boy George's transvestism might stimulate transvestism in the Soviet musical scene.

Glorification of Western culture is a latent feature in Western rock, when transplanted to the communist world. Even if not consciously, Western rock promotes certain values and behaviour which are associated with Western society, and there has long been a tendency for urban youth throughout the world, and perhaps especially in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, to be attracted to things Western, and to believe that the West is culturally superior. As an intellectual position, this orientation has a long history in Russia.[33] East European youth, including even members of official youth organizations, commonly wear blue jeans, and sometimes also stars and stripes emblems and crucifixes. The East German government for a long time forbade the wearing of blue jeans,[34] viewing the fashion as a potential "Trojan horse." American university sweat-shirts became so popular, moreover, that by the late 1970s, the Yugoslavs were making their own facsimiles and selling them in the stores. In Romania, however, the popularity of American university sweat-shirts and of T-shirts adorned with pictures of American pop singers is seen as evidence of "moral pollution."[35] Similarly, in Czechoslovakia, an official commentator warned that Western paraphernalia in music and fashion convert their buyers into "walking advertising pillars for Western companies" and thereby "shape and nourish illusions about the Western way of life and the superiority of the capitalist social system and impede the shaping of a socialist lifestyle."[36] In Bulgaria, where only about a third of "pop music" broadcast on Bulgarian television and radio is native (the rest being mostly American or British), youth have recently taken to wearing exact copies of Western military uniforms, American and British being the most popular.[37]

The infiltration of political dissidence is, however, a more serious

[30] *Tribuna* (Prague, 6 June 1984), trans. in Joint Publications Research Service (JPRS), *East Europe Report* No. EPS-84-090 (23 July 1984), p. 6.

[31] Quoted in *The Times* (London, 18 June 1984), p. 6.

[32] Trans. into Serbo-Croatian under the title, "*Njezni seksi krikovi*," in *Start*, No. 294 (30 April–14 May 1980), pp. 66–67.

[33] See, for instance, Peter Yakovlevich Chaadayev, *Philosophical Letters and Apology of a Madman*, translated by Mary Barbara Zeldin (University of Tennessee Press, Knoxville, 1969).

[34] Mleczkowski, "In Search of the Forbidden," p. 181.

[35] *Scinteia* (Bucharest, 7 Aug. 1983), p. 4.

[36] *Tribuna* (16 Feb. 1983), p. 5, trans. in Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS), *Daily Report* (Eastern Europe), 22 Feb. 1983, p. D9.

[37] *Literaturen Front* (Sofia, 26 Jan. 1984), trans. in JPRS, *East Europe Report* No. EPS-84-031 (1 March 1984), p. 9; and *Serzhant* (Sofia, 1983), No. 2, trans. in JPRS, *East Europe Report* No. 83252 (13 April 1983), p. 2.

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problem, and East European rock groups repeatedly drift towards social criticism and political commentary. One of the best-known rock groups in Eastern Europe used to be the Czech group, Plastic People of the Universe. This outspoken group was put on trial in 1976 after releasing an album entitled "Egon Bundy's Happy Hearts Club Banned."[38] The album came with a 60-page softcover booklet called "The Merry Ghetto." and included a song with the message "war is hell." The album was banned by the authorities.[39] A similar fate befell the East German Renft Combo, which was beginning to dabble in protest songs in the early 1970s; the Combo was banned in 1974. Among current rock groups, the Yugoslav band, Pankrti, based in Ljubljana, is one of the more daring. In open mockery of the Partisan mythology, the group proposed to release an album showing a young man hugging a war monument, and to call the album "The Pankrti in Collaboration with the State." The producer circumspectly disallowed the title and refused to run a picture using any monument from the Second World War. The Pankrti therefore staged the same pose using a monument from World War One, and dubbed the album "Pankrti—Favourites of the State."[40]

The fourth characteristic associated with rock music is the propagation of cultural standards, fashions, and behavioural syndromes which are independent of Party control. To the extent that they persist in spite of Party antagonism, they become implicitly anti-Party, quite independently of any political messages being propounded. Punk and heavy metal countercultures have already penetrated the USSR, the GDR, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Yugoslavia, imposing a cultural specificity in fashion which has rejectionist and nihilist overtones. In the Yugoslav republic of Slovenia, punk has even brought some neo-Nazi cultural symbols in tow, with the Slovenian punk group 4-R (Fourth Reich) appearing attired in Nazi uniforms. The Albanian Party paper, *Zeri i Popullit*, put it this way:

> To accept the extravagant bourgeois and revisionist mode of dress is to create an appropriate terrain for undermining socialist attitudes, behaviour, and convictions. To think that long hair and tight trousers or mini-skirts have nothing to do with one's world outlook, one's ideology, is as naive as it is dangerous. Not to fight alien fashions means to give up the fight against the penetration of the degenerate bourgeois and revisionist ideology.[41]

And finally, rock music is seen to produce a general numbness, blurring concentration. Party spokesmen sometimes argue that the passivity and retreat into indifference fostered by certain bands is a deliberate ploy by "the bourgeois manipulators of thought, ideologues and subversive

[38] A play on the Beatles' album, "Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band."
[39] *International Herald Tribune* (22 Sept. 1978), p. 8.
[40] *NIN*, No. 1663 (14 Nov. 1982).
[41] Quoted in Peter J. Prifti, *Socialist Albania since 1944: Domestic and Foreign Developments* (MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1978), p. 187.

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centres" of "Western capitalism."[42] Czechoslovak newspapers have compared the "new wave of rock" to a drug, arguing that the "deafening noise, monotonous tunes, and primitive, often vulgar texts" are well chosen to inculcate nihilism and cynicism.[43] The bottom line for more orthodox elites, as phrased by Albanian communist spokesmen, is that liberal attitudes in arts and fashion (underpinned with an ultra-liberal philosophy expressed in songs) lead to liberal attitudes in morals, which in turn lead to liberal attitudes in politics. Political liberalism, in turn, undermines communist rule and could lead to the overthrow of the communist power monopoly.[44] Thus, it seemed only logical for Vladimir Makarov, writing in the Krasnodar youth newspaper, *Komsomolets Kubani*, to link Western rock with a CIA master plan to subvert the communist bloc. Indeed, claimed Makarov, Allen Dulles once "said that if we teach young Soviet people to sing our songs and dance to them, then sooner or later we shall teach them to think in the way we need them to."[45]

ROCK music and fashions have hit every East European country to some extent, including even Albania. Their most tangible impact has been in Poland, the GDR, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia. The three most popular rock styles in Poland presently are punk, popper, and hippy (possibly in that order). The Polish punk scene is diverse. There are at least seven types of Polish punks: punks, skins, skanks, Krasowcy, skinheads, and others. There are probably well over 300 active rock groups in Poland today, including numerous punk bands, in such cities as Warsaw, Gdansk, Nowa Huta, and Cracow.[46] Polish radio broadcasts as much as 24 hours of Western rock per week on channel three, and 10 hours per week on channel four. And a survey conducted in 1982 by Leszek Janik found that listening to rock music was the most popular form of recreation for young Poles, and that more than 70 per cent of Polish high school students were "well-acquainted" with rock music and culture.[47]

Polish rock is infused with politics, and many of the leading rock bands have taken overtly political names, such as Delirium Tremens, The Fifth Column, SS-20 (renamed, under pressure, The Deserter), Pathology of Pregnancy, Verdict, Crisis, Shortage, Paralysis, and Protest. Polish punk may have been reinforced, in particular, by the despondency created by

[42] *Tribuna* (23 March 1983), p. 5, trans. in JPRS, *East Europe Report* No. 83438 (10 May 1983), p. 21. Along the same lines, *Komsomolskaya Pravda* (16 Sept. 1984) charged that "the implantation of complete social and political passivity, indifference to the most acute problems of the present day, and the cult of the 'good life'—these are the basic postulates of Western propaganda." Trans. in JPRS, *USSR Report* No. UPS–84–091 (19 Oct. 1984), p. 15.

[43] *Tribuna* (23 March 1983), pp. 22–23. *Tribuna* added that punk music was "encourag[ing] young people to fight against our system." Quoted in *Klassekampen* (Oslo, 19 Oct. 1984), p. 5, trans. in JPRS, *East Europe Report* No. EPS–84–150 (16 Dec. 1984), p. 6.

[44] Prifti, *Socialist Albania*, p. 187.

[45] Quoted in *Soviet Analyst*, Vol. 13, No. 15 (25 July 1984), p. 3.

[46] See *Der Spiegel* (28 May 1984), pp. 165–171.

[47] Poland/Situation Report, *Radio Free Europe Research* (28 Sept. 1984), p. 10.

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the suppression of Solidarity and numerous other independent structures in December 1981. The regime is especially sensitive to punk, but uncertain how best to cope with the problem. In August 1984, a huge rock festival (the 15th annual) was held at Jarocin, with nearly 19,000 young people pitching tents to listen to 60 Polish groups perform. Some 300 groups had applied for regime permission, but only 60 were approved, after submitting their songs for clearance. The uncertainty in such a procedure is illustrated by the case of the approved group, Perfect, which had properly submitted the texts of its songs to the authorities for approval. At the concert, the approved line, "we want to be ourselves" was replaced with "we want to beat ZOMO,"[48] and the approved line "don't be afraid of anyone" was replaced by "don't be afraid of Jaruzelski."[49]

Most new-wave bands are unable to obtain official clearance to cut a record, but private tapes of "garage performances" proliferate. Although Polish punk is an import from the West, Polish punks now consider that they represent a purer, even superior, strain of punk culture. "In Britain they sing 'no future'," said a leading Polish punk vocalist. "But I'd like to be on welfare payments there! If you want to know what 'no future' means, come to Poland!"[50] This bleakness colours the lyrics sung by Polish punk bands. The punk band WC, for instance, offers a nihilistic vision in one song:

> Poseurs, fetishists—destroy them all!
> A generation of conformists—destroy them all!
> Your ideals—destroy them all![51]

And in another song, WC mocks the coercive foundation upon which the post-Solidarity regime is built:

> I am a tank, I am a tank.
> I am strong, I am healthy.
> I can only beat everyone . . .
> I can go only [straight] ahead.
> And I do not need to eat.
> I am afraid of nothing,
> You are tight—so what[!][52]

Other bands, with names like Cadaver and Clinically Dead, project despair that has deepened into resignation and apathy. Another band, Manaam, won critical acclaim in 1983 for the release of an album called "Night Patrol." One of its songs is set against the background of wailing sirens and the sounds of breaking glass, and, in a dispassionate falsetto, describes daily life in contemporary Poland in these terms:

[48] ZOMO is the Polish secret police.
[49] Quoted in Poland/Situation, p. 9.
[50] Quoted in *Christian Science Monitor* (20 Sept. 1983), p. 7.
[51] Quoted in *Der Spiegel* (28 May 1984), p. 171.
[52] Quoted in Poland/Situation, p. 9.

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Shadows in the dark city
Linger through the night.
Danger lurks by your doorway,
Don't turn out the light. . . .
Don't go out alone
Evil is prowling. . . .
Night patrol's alert
Making sure that you're OK
That you don't get hurt,
Anxious to protect you.
Everything's all right.
Shadows in the sad city
Bleed through the night.[53]

Lyrics like these have drawn charges of "fascism" from the Party dailies *Zolnierz Wolnosci* and *Trybuna Ludu*.

Manaam's lead singer, Kora Jackowska, has been among the most outspoken, and has won prizes from the youth weekly *Sztandar Mlodych*, and from the magazine *Jazz Forum*. Jackowska has also come to the regime's attention, and for good reason, since she does not shy away from searing commentary. In one [criticized] song, for example, she sings:

Treason, treason
Cunning, cold, calculating . . .
Broken promises, broken light,
White is black and black is white . . .
Don't talk back, turn the other cheek . . .
Talk out of line if you dare.
Don't make me look, I don't want to see.
Is everyone a traitor or is it just me?
Treason sneaks into your bed.[54]

What has happened in Poland, as this song reflects, is that the nihilism and scepticism of much of rock, and of punk especially, have become more focused, more clearly anti-government. Rock culture in Poland is thus overtly political. To deal with the ground swell of "social pathology" (as the regime calls it) among Polish youth, Warsaw issued directives in January 1984, advising school teachers and administrators to compile lists of punks, hippies, "fascists," and social "misfits."[55] These lists are turned over to the police, and those thus identified are placed under surveillance. In addition, the Ministry of Education has drawn up a set of "social preventative and resocializing measures" aimed at "eliminating the causes of poor social adaptation" and "protecting children and young people from the effects of social pathology."[56]

[53] Ibid.
[54] Ibid. p. 11.
[55] *Die Tagezeitung* (Berlin, 24 Jan. 1984) p. 9.
[56] Quoted in J. B., "Poland's Alienated Youth," *Radio Free Europe Research* (7 April 1984), p. 17.

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THE Czechoslovak rock scene presents a striking contrast to the Polish. In Czechoslovakia, the kind of noisy defiance which the Polish groups display is out of the question. Lyrics must be more subtle, if the band plans to stay out of prison, and the singers must be content with irony, or at most, ridicule and ambiguous sarcasm. A recent untitled Czech number illustrates this quite clearly:

> Women leave me unmoved
> Emotions I scorn
> I'm well liked at work
> My record stays clean.
> I welcome after-hours chores:
> The bosses always get my vote.
> I ask for extra duties free
> And hope they will take note . . .
> I'll miss [my] date
> But not the meeting—
> Union of Youth, you know.
> Sessions and lectures
> All day long.
> Friends of Cremation
> Have asked me to call.[57]

In general, the Prague regime has remained suspicious of all rock music. Yet certain groups have been the beneficiaries of official sanction—such as Olympus, Abraxus, and Catapult, though in 1983 the last of these was eventually banned from performing in central Bohemia, including Prague. Another group, the Yellow Dog Band, changed its name in 1983 to The Musical Entertainment Group of O. Hejma, and adjusted its repertoire, in order to stay off the blacklist. The strait-laced Czechoslovak regime has thus forced the more daring music underground. Yet even among those groups that receive official support, lyrics may be provocative. If they were not, it would be difficult to see how they could establish any credibility among youth. An example is the rock band Bronz, which performed a rock opera in Prague, with official support. One of its songs includes the line, "Our master is king; his name is heroin."[58]

The 1976 suppression of Plastic People of the Universe and DG-307, two of the most popular groups in their day, was followed by a clamp-down on the rock scene generally.[59] From 1976 to 1981, Czechoslovak authorities kept a tight rein on rock music. The bureaucrats decided what was permissible and what was not, though needless to say, these decisions were not taken on an aesthetic basis or musically. As a rule, the authorities were most concerned about the lyrics being sung. But two talented musicians, Vladimir Merta and Vladimir

[57] Quoted on Czechoslovakia/Situation Report, *Radio Free Europe Research* (10 Aug. 1984), p. 16.
[58] *Gegenstimmen* (Vienna, Winter 1983), pp. 2–6, trans. in JPRS, *East Europe Report* No. EPS–84–023 (10 Feb. 1984), p. 5.
[59] Otto Ulc, "Social Deviance in Czechoslovakia," in Volgyes (ed.), *Social Deviance in Eastern Europe*, p. 29.

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Misik, ran into trouble after the authorities decided that their music was "too inventive and interesting."[60] In the late 1970s, a handful of avant-garde groups, such as Electrobus, Extempore, Stehlik (Goldfinch), and Zaba (Frog) began to stretch the prescribed limits, in semi-official concerts. Their performances played havoc with rhythm and melody, interspersed periods of silence between songs (in one case for half an hour), and naturally attracted the attention of the police. It was not until 1981, however, that punk, by then five years old, reached Czechoslovakia. Czechoslovak punk bands such as Jasna Paka (Patent), Letadlo (Aeroplane), and Prazsky Vyber (Prague Selection) were able to hold a number of concerts in Prague by mid-1982. Their songs dealt with sexual problems and the drab and depressing life in Prague apartment buildings.[61] Various student clubs also began to organize punk concerts at about this time. Since every concert must be cleared by a Party official, it appears that some of the supervisors of musical tastes have been inclined to take a more lenient stance since 1982.

In March 1983, however, an aggressively abusive article by Jan Kryzl in the pages of *Tribuna* signalled a stiffening of resolve on the regime's part. Rock music, charged Kryzl, encourages

> passivity and a retreat from reality into a dream world. . . . Be indifferent to life around you, do not agree with anyone, be against everything! Nothing has any meaning! This is to become the creed of the young generation! The enforcement of this creed was, and is, to be aided by the so-called punk rock, crazy rock, or repugnant [*previt*] rock. . . . The aim is more than obvious—to . . . instill in young people's minds the philosophy of "no future" and attitudes, conduct and views that are alien to socialism.[62]

Patent and other bands were banned, and many groups were stripped of their managers and sponsors. The official blacklist of "unrecommended" rock groups, which contained 36 entries in 1981, was tangibly augmented, and by September 1983, the blacklist for the Central Bohemia region alone listed 27 bands.[63] Punk bands came to be included in the ranks of "public enemies Number One." *Melodie*, the officially supported pop music journal, which had established a substantial following among devotees of the rock scene, fell into disfavour. The entire (well-qualified) editorial staff was ejected, and replaced by people lacking the appropriate professional credentials. The crackdown caused a public outcry. *Tribuna* was flooded with letters of protest, and the issue which had carried Kryzl's rather overstated article became a high-demand commodity. The Jazz Section of the Czech Union of Musicians published a reply to Kryzl in May 1983, linking punk with left-wing politics and pointing out that the increase in social violence in Czechoslovakia, which

[60] *Gegenstimmen*, p. 2.
[61] Ibid. p. 3.
[62] *Tribuna* (23 March 1983), p. 5, trans. in JPRS, *East Europe Report* No. 83438 (10 May 1983), pp. 21–22.
[63] Czechoslovakia/Situation Report, *Radio Free Europe Report* (13 Sept. 1983), pp. 10, 12.

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Kryzl attributed to punk, predates the arrival of punk in that country. The dissident movement Charter 77 also spoke out on behalf of Czechoslovak rock groups. *Tribuna* itself, in a series of follow-up articles, mused ambiguously on Czechoslovak youth's "lack of knowledge"[64] and even seemed to back off, noting that "leading officials, who are usually people belonging to the older generation, should realize that their notions of music and its 'correct' form are not necessarily always adequate and realistic." And hence, there should be "greater tolerance of the divergent tastes of different generations. . . . We should support searching, the raising of questions, critical reasoning, and the solution of real problems, even if this entails taking risks."[65]

Public outcry has had only the slightest impact, however. The protesting Jazz Section of the Czech Union of Musicians was subsequently harassed, and eventually ordered to disband, in October 1984.[66] A rock festival planned for June 1983 (in the village of Zabrice) was cancelled by the authorities at the last minute. The blacklist has been enforced, and recalcitrant bands have retreated to garage performances. The only, exceptional, relaxation came in spring 1984, when Czechoslovak authorities allowed the British rock star Elton John to play in Prague. He was already booked to perform in Poland, Hungary, and Yugoslavia.[67]

PHILOSOPHICAL nihilism, such as is espoused by punk counterculture, is not new to East Germany. On the contrary, Berlin is its original home. It was here that Max Stirner (1806–1856) penned his famous work, *The Ego and His Own*, in which he denounced socialism, communism, liberalism, philanthropy, altruism, religion, law, government, and morality.[68] Stirner's incantations—"The people is dead—Up with me!,"[69] "Everything sacred is a tie, a fetter,"[70] "My freedom becomes complete only when it is my might,"[71] "All truth by itself is dead . . . Of itself it is valueless,"[72]—find resonances in contemporary punk. It may be noted, further, that a nihilistic-anarchist movement, strongly influenced by Stirner's ideas, appeared in Germany in the 1890s.[73]

[64] *Tribuna* (12 Oct. 1983), p. 6, trans. in JPRS, *East Europe Report* No. 84956 (15 Dec. 1983), p. 25.
[65] *Tribuna* (16 Nov. 1983), p. 4, excerpts trans. in JPRS, *East Europe Report* No. 85003 (22 Dec. 1983), p. 7.
[66] *Klassekampen* (19 Oct. 1984), p. 5, trans. in JPRS, *East Europe Report* No. EPS-84-150 (6 Dec. 1984), pp. 4–5.
[67] *Washington Post* (18 May 1984), p. A29.
[68] Max Stirner, *The Ego and His Own*, trans. by Steven T. Byington, (ed.), James J. Martin (Libertarian Book Club, New York, 1963). See also John Henry Mackay, *Max Stirner: Sein Leben und Sein Werk* (Mackay-Gesellschaft, Freiburg, 1977); and R. W. K. Paterson, *The Nihilist Egoist: Max Stirner* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1971).
[69] Stirner, *The Ego and His Own*, p. 217.
[70] Ibid. p. 216.
[71] Ibid. p. 166.
[72] Ibid. p. 354.
[73] Andrew R. Carlson, *Anarchism in Germany*, Vol. I (Scarecrow Press, Metuchen, N.J., 1972), p. 66.

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The East German regime's failure to expunge such currents is, of course, a source of concern to Party officials dealing with culture. Communism promises to eradicate alienation, but East German punks flaunt their alienation in their fashions, their speech, their songs, and in scrawlings on public walls: "*legal, illegal, scheissegal.*"[74] An East German punk expressed the punk mentality in these terms: "Philistinism turns me off. I am against Germanness. The German is, for me, a *petit bourgeois* and a philistine by nature. I am bothered by this whole pretence, by this mask which is there but which no one removes."[75] The regime is intolerant of punk, has broken up punk gatherings in Leipzig in 1981 and 1982, and has inaugurated a policy of punishing students who come to school in punk attire.[76] But punk bands and other prohibited rock groups have had the opportunity to perform, instead, in Evangelical-Lutheran churches. Rather than turning its guns on all rock indiscriminately, however—as the Czechoslovak communists have essentially done—the East German regime has tried to encourage tame rock, and to harness it. A decree on discotheques was issued in 1973 and "discothequers" (disc-jockeys) are now required to enroll in a course of ideological and political training. Once graduated, discothequers are expected to see that at least 60 per cent of the music they play originates from the bloc, and to intersperse topical information and "positive" political commentary between hits.[77] The official youth organization, Free German Youth (FGY), operates several thousand discotheques, and discothequers are generally also functionaries of the youth organization. The FGY even organized a major public rock concert in October 1983. Thus far, it would appear that East German policy has paid off. In contrast to neighbouring Poland and Czechoslovakia, there is a sense that rock music is not bad in and of itself. This qualified acceptance of certain kinds of rock —though not of punk—has created a "grey zone" in which many East German youths find it possible to function.

OF THE remaining East European countries, it is clearly Yugoslavia which has the liveliest rock scene. It is also politically the most innocent, partly because of the tangibly more liberal disposition of the regime towards culture. Much of the "Yu-rock" scene is either new wave or a local synthesis of "old wave," new wave, and indigenous innovations. Serbian groups like Sizike (The Crazies) and Elektricni Orgazam (Electric Orgasm), and Slovenian groups like Rendezvous and Videosex, serve up a lighter fare—though Videosex's explicit treatment of lesbianism, sadism, and voyeurism created a sensation—and recently break-dancing ("*brejkdens*") has hit Yugoslavia too.[78] A Belgrade group

[74] Euphemistically translated: "legal, illegal, all the same."

[75] Quoted in *Der Spiegel* (3 Jan. 1983), p. 131.

[76] For further details, see Ramet, "Disaffection and Dissent in East Germany," pp. 92–93.

[77] *Informationen* (Bonn, 11 Nov. 1983), pp. 17–18, trans. in JPRS, *East Europe Report* No. EPS-84-007 (16 Jan. 1985), p. 42.

[78] *Vjesnik* (Zagreb, 7 May 1984), p. 5; *Duga* (Belgrade, 2–16 June 1984), p. 51; Nenad Neoricic, "Brejkdens parti," in *Reporter* (Belgrade), No. 930 (29 January 1985), p. 5; and Goran Lisica," Suze Erosove," in *Reporter*, No. 946 (28 May 1985), p. 45.

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called In Trouble has become one of the most popular rock groups in the country by pointedly shunning social messages and scandals. In Trouble's lead singer, Milan Delcic, disarmingly confessed to *Vjesnik*, "We wanted to escape the [Balkan shock] style and be just an ordinary rock group."[79] The degree of acceptance of rock in Yugoslavia is implicit in *Vjesnik's* establishment of a regular *diskoteka* feature column in 1984. Columnist Milan Metrović keeps *Vjesnik's* readers abreast of American, British, and naturally Yugoslav rock record releases, discusses the Yugoslav disco scene, and, on at least one occasion, has listed the address at which a Zagreb rock group could be contacted.[80] The success of this column led *Vjesnik* to establish a "Yu-rock banter" (*Yu-rock govor*) column, written by Darko Glavan, in early 1985.

Yet the regime has also had its headaches with the rock scene. Intermittently, Croatian singers have appealed to Croatian nationalism. In Slovenia, a small punk scene has made an appearance, and the Slovenian punk-Nazi group 4-R held at least one concert attired in Nazi-style brownshirts and displaying swastikas.[81] Then there is the case of Bora Djordjevic, a self-styled "angry rebel" currently enjoying a certain following in Zagreb, where he played to a delirious audience in November 1984, as well as in Belgrade. Djordjevic's album, "The Truth," which was released in spring 1984 and which is reminiscent of Deep Purple, stirred controversy in the public press. The music, said Party officials, was "ethically unacceptable."[82] Mirjana Rakela, president of the Croatian youth organization, explained at the time that in her view the brazen criticism favoured by Djordjevic and other rock "rebels" could easily grow into a full-fledged "counterculture"—a development she preferred to forestall.[83] Yet Djordjevic continues to espouse his strain of "rock-pauper nihilism," and was featured in an interview article in *Vjesnik* in December 1984.

The Yugoslav rock scene has not only established a real presence in the country, with more groups playing currently than ever before, but has also integrated itself into the economy. There is a magazine, *Rock*, devoted to the genre, a television equivalent of "Solid Gold" (namely, "Hit mjeseca"), and considerable support from the radio and other media. Rock records have also become big business, and most of the major cities (including Sarajevo, Skopje, and Split) can boast local groups. The satanic and overtly morbid features of heavy metal have been noticed.[84] But thus far there is no sign of particular concern either with this sub-genre or with rock music in general, among the Party elite at large. The consensus among Party elders seems to be that rock music is an innocent enough diversion, at worst an ineluctable form of escapism.

[79] Quoted in *Vjesnik* (29 Dec. 1984), p. 11.
[80] Ibid. (3 Dec. 1984), p. 9.
[81] For further details, see Pedro Ramet, "Apocalypse Culture and Social Change," in Pedro Ramet (ed.), *Yugoslavia in the 1980s* (Westview Press, Boulder, Colo.; 1985).
[82] *Vjesnik* (8 Dec. 1984), p. 11.
[83] Ibid. (13 April 1984), p. 4.
[84] Vesna Peric-Zimonjic, "Rock: Generacijski parastos," in *Reporter*, No. 947 (14 June 1985), p. 10.

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Besides, Yugoslavia has long been open to Western cultural influence to a far greater extent than other countries in Eastern Europe, so the appearance of a new strain of attraction is intrinsically less threatening there.

In Romania and Bulgaria, by contrast, a true rock scene has been slower to develop. Discotheques have become popular in both countries, to be sure,[85] but there is no sign (at the time of writing) of an emerging native rock culture, let alone any punks. Hence, the anti-rock decree issued by the Bulgarian Council of Ministers on 17 February 1984 was aimed not at local groups but at Bulgarian radio and Bulgarian discotheques, which popularize Western youth music.[86] Georgi Dzhagarov, Vice President of the State Council and Chairman of the Standing Commission on Spiritual Values, went so far as to declare that "the whole country has been disquieted by the muddy stream of musical trends sweeping away all the true values of music."[87] The solution, as the Bulgarian CP sees it, is to revive Bulgarian folk music and dances.

Finally, there is the more relaxed atmosphere in Hungary, which brought in the film version of "Jesus Christ Superstar" in June 1983, staged a mammoth rock concert in the village of Pelisborosjeno in August 1983 (in connection with the filming of a rock horror film, "The Predator"), and premiered the first Hungarian rock opera, "Stephen the King," on 20 August 1983—St. Stephen's Day. Disco had already become big business, with some 400 licensed youth clubs in Budapest by early 1982, and additional dance clubs in almost every town and village.[88] But it was "Stephen the King" which has stirred the most discussion. Based on the play by Miklos Boldizsar, the opera relates the story of Stephen's founding of the Hungarian Kingdom in 1001 and his conversion to Christianity. It opened to an impressive crowd of 10,000 spectators. The opera is unabashedly nationalistic and

> ends with a poignant scene in which the music celebrating the newly crowned king changes almost imperceptibly into the national anthem, and a large Hungarian flag appears over the crest of the hill. A provincial daily reported that the applause that followed [one performance] lasted for 45 minutes. . . .[89]

The production has drawn an emotional response from Hungarian audiences, and the work was quickly contracted for performances for both record and film. And while dramatist Boldizsar denied any interest in using the opera as a vehicle for commentary on the present,[90] opera director Gabor Koltay told an interviewer that part of the opera's

[85] *Vjesnik* (8 Dec. 1984), p. 11.

[86] *Munca* (Budapest, 2 March 1984), p. 4; and *The Economist* (London, 7 July 1984), p. 45.

[87] *Narodna Kultura* (24 Feb. 1984), quoted in Bulgaria/Situation Report, *Radio Free Europe Research* (30 March 1984), p. 12.

[88] *Christian Science Monitor* (8 Feb. 1982), p. 2.

[89] Edith Markos, "'Stephen the King' or Stephen the Superstar," *Radio Free Europe Research* (19 Sept. 1983), p. 15.

[90] *Magyar Nemzet* (3 March 1984), p. 9, trans. in JPRS, *East Europe Report* No. EPS-84-044 (5 April 1984), p. 13.

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popularity is attributable to the continued relevance of its themes. In Koltay's words, "the question of how a small nation finds its way to survive is always valid."[91]

In the context of Hungary's more relaxed atmosphere, the groups which have attracted the most criticism are those playing punk, which in 1983 were described by certain Hungarian authorities as having a "pernicious effect on the morals of the young."[92] Hungarian punk groups have at various times insulted the dignity of Romanian Party leader Nicolae Ceausescu (a favourite Hungarian pastime anyway), expressed the desire to indulge in corporal dismemberment, evoked a phrase calling forth the defecatory bombardment of the planet, and endorsed extermination of the Gypsies. It was the punk group Mosoly which, in an unadvertised appearance at a February 1983 concert, expressed the last-mentioned sentiment:

> The flame thrower is the only weapon with which I can win;
> I destroy every Gypsy, adult and child!
> Annihilate them altogether;
> When we have dispatched them, we can put up a sign:
> Gypsy-free zone![93]

In a country which still retains lively memories of the Nazi genocide in the Second World War, such lyrics have a positively nightmarish quality. What is worse, that nightmarish quality is deliberate. In spite of that, the Hungarian political establishment is divided over the question as to whether punk rock should be tolerated or just muffled somehow.

THE tendencies of Soviet cultural tsars to manipulate classical music, as witnessed in the tendency to reward composers for heroic and triumphant music and to punish them for dissonant music, have been, for diverse reasons, frustrated where rock music is concerned. Heroic-triumphant rock, wedded to the service of proletarian communism, is perhaps not a contradiction in terms, but the fact that it strikes one at once as unnatural, or even subverted, is symptomatic of the difficulty in the enterprise of attempting to harness rock music to serve socialization (as has been tried in the USSR and in the GDR). Soviet officialdom wavers between two views. On the one hand, there have been numerous articles linking rock music with Western ideological sabotage. Typical of this viewpoint is an article which appeared in *Sovetskaya Estoniya* in January 1981. According to its author,

> the struggle against the domination of bad commercial music (it is bad, because dance music is also commercial) is not a short-term matter. We must recognize that this is part of the struggle between two ideologies, and it should not be restricted to prohibitions and

[91] *Christian Science Monitor* (30 Nov. 1983), p. 14.
[92] Quoted in Hungary/Situation Report, *Radio Free Europe Research* (30 Aug. 1983), p. 17.
[93] Ibid.

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> silence. We must conduct this campaign constantly, intelligently, convincingly, from a Party point of view.[94]

On the other hand, Soviet commentators sometimes show a recognition that the rock music genre is an art form with an autonomous life and a natural appeal. Writing in this vein, V. Volkov suggested in a 1984 article for *Argumenty i Fakty* that the musicians themselves, through their professional societies, take more responsibility to ensure the quality of public performances.[95]

In 1978, there were scarcely any discos in the Soviet Union.[96] Today, there are hundreds, if not thousands, of places where young people can dance to the latest rock, which can be divided into four broad categories: firstly, public discos and bars, operated by or supervised by the Komsomol (youth organization) and featuring approved groups and recordings; secondly, elite night spots, reserved for *priviligentsia* of the Party and bureaucracy (which may feature more daring fare); thirdly, hotel discos for tourists, playing exclusively Western rock, to which locals find it more difficult, though not impossible, to gain access; and fourthly, the "unofficial music" scene, embracing everything not permitted by the authorities. Of these, it is clearly categories one and four which cause concern among the authorities. The "official music" scene (category one) includes groups playing in all the Soviet republics. It includes officers' clubs for the Soviet Army. It even includes a rock opera—"Yunona and Avos"—which has played for some two and half years at the Komsomol Theatre in Moscow.[97] And in 1981, a rock festival was held in the Georgian town of Tiflis. Official discos are subject to periodic inspection. Official disc jockeys are required to complete courses in Marxist ideology and are issued licences permitting them to operate either throughout their given republics, only within their home town, or only in a specified club.[98] Officially tolerated groups are expected to eschew political controversy. But the "official" groups do not always stick to innocent themes. One of the most popular Soviet groups in recent years, Time Machine, for instance, ran into trouble after singing:

> I don't believe any promises any longer.
> There's no point in believing promises.[99]

It seemed obvious to the regime that the promises in question were those of the Communist Party, and as a result, the youth newspaper, *Komsomol'skaya Pravda*, opened fire on the group. Time Machine,

[94] *Sovetskaya Estoniya* (18 Jan. 1981), trans. in JPRS, *USSR Report* No. 77678 (26 March 1981), p. 44.
[95] *Argumenty i Fakty* (27 March 1984), p. 6, trans. in JPRS, *USSR Report* No. UPS-84-071 (17 Aug. 1984), p. 64. The presence of these two alternative currents is scarcely new and can in fact be dated from the earliest days of the Bolshevik Revolution. For details, see Starr, *Red and Hot*, pp. 37–53.
[96] *Los Angeles Times* (19 Nov. 1978), Part VII, p. 7.
[97] *Znamenosets* (Moscow, Dec. 1983), pp. 10–11; *Neue Züricher Zeitung* (18 April 1984), p. 4; and *Argumenty i Fakty*, p. 63.
[98] *Noorte Hall* (Tallinn, 25 July 1982), p. 2, trans. in JPRS, *USSR Report* No. 81973 (13 Oct. 1982), p. 59.
[99] *Der Spiegel* (10 Oct 1983), p. 216.

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warned the Komsomol organ, was "injecting the youth with dubious ideas."[100] Time Machine has been hampered in its efforts to record more of its music, and the authorities have advised the group that if it hopes to win the favour of officialdom, it should add some violins and flutes to its ensemble and sing optimistic songs.[101] Similarly, the Latvian group, Perkons (Thunder), reported to be the most popular group in Latvia, was awarded a certificate of merit for stressing appropriate "social and political themes" at an officially sponsored rock festival in Liepaja in July 1984, but has, even so, been restricted to performing in small concert halls in Latvia.[102]

The "unofficial music" scene (category four) embraces those groups which perform in defiance of the authorities. These include religiously motivated groups, such as the Baptist band, Trumpet Call, two of whose leading members were arrested in spring 1984, after more than a year of harassment. They were sentenced, in November 1984, to two and a half years in a labour camp. But to the authorities' dismay, amateur musical groups keep "popping up like mushrooms after rain."[103] Also in this category are the nihilistically inclined punk bands and the heavy metal rockers. Described by Starr as "aggressively anti-social," Soviet punk and heavy metal groups, sporting the usual garish make-up and costumes and singing confrontationally obscene lyrics, met with a difficult reception in most cities when they first appeared in the late 1970s. However, the Georgian Republic has proven more tolerant of punk than other parts of the USSR and played host to various punk concerts and dances at Batumi and other Black Sea resorts.[104]

NOT all rock music is conceived as counterculture *per se*. New wave, for instance, seems better described as self-assertion; on the other hand, the whole point of punk is to reject everything that civilized society offers. A Polish punk explained punk philosophy in these terms:

> Sometimes I am a pacifist; at other times I am a vulgar cad. I provoke through my appearance. I want others to feel that here is still a bit of freedom. [The adults] want to profit from us, to organize us, and I do not want to be a prisoner. I am going to evade them . . . I joined the punks to protest against constraint.[105]

The spread of rock counterculture in the communist states of Europe has, as in the West, been associated with increased drug abuse, outlandish fashions, and a self-conscious striving to be "socially deviant."[106] That a newspaper in even relatively remote Baku could find cause to complain, recently, that

[100] *Vjesnik* (5 June 1982) p. 3.
[101] Vlastimir Nesic, "Rock u SSR-u," in *Reporter*, No. 947 (14 June 1985), p. 40.
[102] *Christian Science Monitor* (28 Aug. 1984), p. 8.
[103] *Znamya Yunosti* (27 July 1984), excerpted in *Keston News Service*, No. 207 (30 Aug. 1984), p. 3.
[104] S. Frederick Starr, "The Rock Inundation," in *The Wilson Quarterly*, Vol. 7, No. 4 (Autumn 1983), p. 63.
[105] *Sztandar Mlodych* (Warsaw, 25 Oct. 1983), p. 3, trans. in JPRS, *East Europe Report* No. EPS-84-006 11 Jan. 1985), p. 94.
[106] Starr, "The Rock Inundation," p. 62.

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> performance styles, strange clothing and personal appearance, the unnecessary use of amplifying equipment, [etc.] . . . are . . . harming the ideational-aesthetic education of youth and creating conditions for the spread of abnormalities alien to us[107]

is an indication of the wide appeal that rock music has achieved in these countries. There is, to be sure, a certain time lag in fashions. Yugoslavia is about two years behind American rock fashions. In Romania, where Kenny Rogers, the Swedish group Abba, and various Italian rock groups serve as models, the rock scene is perhaps roughly six to seven years behind Western trends.

There have been repeated reports in the Soviet and East European media in recent years that youth have been politically disengaged, passive, and anti-social, that regime-sponsored youth organizations are in trouble, that illicit drug use and trafficking are increasing, and that juvenile crime is on the rise. At the same time, there has not been—to the best of my knowledge—a single serious claim, in any academic or scientific journal published in these countries, that rock music is a "cause" of any of these phenomena. Rock music can, however, provide a setting in which drug use is "comfortable" and can offer a more exciting alternative to youth organization work. But the social impact of rock does not end there. On the contrary, the political messages—more tolerable for the more secure regimes of Hungary and Yugoslavia, less tolerable for the less secure regimes of Poland and Czechoslovakia—constitute a kind of "counter-socialization." Rock music is, at the very least, problematic for these regimes.

Ironically, precisely because of their misgivings about rock music, both the East German and Soviet regimes have gone into the business of organizing rock festivals, in order to have some control over who sings what. Several of the East European governments, including the East German, the Bulgarian, and the Soviet, have established ideological courses for prospective disc-jockeys, and have attempted to hold rock establishments to politically decreed norms. The Soviet aspiration to coopt the disco scene outright is clear from the text of the Statute on Amateur Discotheques issued by the USSR Ministry of Culture in 1980. According to this statute,

> a discotheque must contribute to an improvement in the moral and cultural level and to the instilling of an artistic taste and high dance culture. That is to say, the form of club contact . . . [has] to be filled with a new content worthy of the Soviet citizen.[108]

As I have suggested above, there are several levels on which rock music is disconcerting to most of the ruling parties of Eastern Europe. The diversity of policies in this sphere is clearly a reflection of the differences of policy more broadly conceived. But beyond this there lies a more

[107] *Kommunist* (Baku, 23 Sept. 1984), p. 1, trans. in JPRS, *USSR Report* No. UPS–85–010 (8 Feb. 1985), p. 9.

[108] *Znamenosets* (Dec. 1983), trans. in JPRS, *USSR Report* No. UMA–84–023 (20 March 1984), p. 32.

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fundamental question, to wit, whether rock counterculture really constitutes a force for non-directed socialization, or whether its appurtenant behavioural specificities are mere superficialities with no lasting importance. After all, the generation reared on American rock protest in the late 1960s has now gone on to join the establishment: could not the current rock generation in the communist world do the same? It is a measure of the insecurity of most of these regimes (that is, all but the Yugoslav and perhaps the Hungarian) that they consider themselves unable to assimilate those with somewhat different socialization without damage to their overall programmes. It may be true, as Radio Moscow declared last year, that "no form of art exists—indeed, it is impossible for it to exist—which does not carry along with it some kind of underlying political or ideological concepts,"[109] but it is equally the case that no regime can hope completely to freeze out currents for change welling up from the cultural—or countercultural—sphere.

[109] Moscow Domestic Service (2 July 1984), trans. in JPRS, *USSR Report* No. UPS-84-068 (3 Aug. 1984), p. 18.

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The Nature of Official Documents Concerning Control of Vocal/ Instrumental Groups and Discotheques*

> "*. . . one does suspect . . . that there might possibly be certain criminally minded organizations, which, with large amounts of money at their disposal, as well as access to a wide range of information, expose people to apparently spiritually beneficial elements which are in fact spiritually harmful and irrational, as one stupefying novelty follows another.*"
>
> **Vladimir Soloukhin**, "New York—Discotheque,"
>
> *Bedstviye s golubyami*[1]

FIRST of all we shall cite a list of documents, both directive (those of Party Komsomol organs) and normative (those of state organs and public organizations). We shall then make an attempt to discover the meaning and aims of the struggle against amateur musical groups, but we shall refrain from making a final assessment of the significance of the campaign in question within the wider range of measures directed towards young people in the USSR.

1. A decree of the Fifth Plenum of the Central Committee of VLKSM (*Vsyesoyuzny Leninskii Kommunisticheskii Soyuz Molodyozhi*—the All-Union Leninist Communist Youth League) of 8 July 1983, "On the aims of the Komsomol to reinforce the communist education of young people, as a result of the resolutions of the June 1983 Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU, and the speech on this subject delivered by General Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU, Comrade Yurii Andropov."[2]

2. A resolution of the board of the USSR Ministry of Culture, "On the implementation of decisions taken by the June Plenum."[3]

3. The resolutions of certain *raikom* (district committee) assemblies of the Komsomol, "to establish scientific methodological centres, on the

* Radio Liberty, *Arkhiv Samizdata*, No. 34, 18 Oct. 1985.

[1] Moscow, 1984, p. 159.

[2] Party Workers' Handbook (Moscow, 1984), issue 24, No. 2, p. 330.

[3] *Sovetskaya Kultura*, 14 July 1983.

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foundations of regional youth clubs, where recommendations and allowances will be devised for clubs, discotheques and young people's cafés."[4]

4. A decree of the Central Committee of the CPSU, undated, "On the further improvement of Party guidance by the Komsomol and the increase of its role in the communist education of young people."[5] The following demands were included:

> —not to let apoliticality, immorality and blind imitation of Western fashions infiltrate into circles of young people under the guise of amateur associations.
> —to close off all channels of influence into literature and art of unprincipled behaviour and trivial vulgarity, in order to set up a reliable barrier to keep out the influence of bourgeois "popular culture."

In connection with this decree the following appeared:

5. A directive of the Secretariat of the Komsomol Central Committee, of 15 August 1984, "On measures for increasing the role of Komsomol committees in the work of vocal/instrumental groups."[6]

6. A directive of the Ministry of Culture of the RSFSR, of 16 August 1984, "On measures for the regulation of the activities of vocal/instrumental groups and discotheques, for improving the ideological/artistic standard of their repertoires."[7] This directive, as is apparent, repeats the text of Order No. 361 of the USSR Ministry of Culture of 25 July 1984, which is referred to in *Arkhiv Samizdata* No. 5519; cf.: "A *year ago* now the board of the Ministry of Culture of the USSR considered the question of the conditions and perfection of activities by vocal/instrumental groups, having approved a plan for active measures to be taken. Above all it was recommended that interdepartmental councils be set up in the provinces to be concerned in particular with musical variety performances and vocal/instrumental groups."[8]

7. Order No. 607 by the Ministry of Higher and Middle Specialized Education of the USSR, of 22 August 1984, "On measures for the regulation of activities of vocal/instrumental groups in higher and middle level specialized educational establishments, and for the improvement of the ideological/artistic standard of their repertoires,"[9] stipulating:

> —the raising of the ideological/artistic standard;
> —reinforcement of control over the formation of amateur vocal/instrumental groups and their performances—one of the conditions

[4] Quoted in an account of the assembly of the *raikom* Komsomol group at Sokolny, Moscow district, in *Moskovskii Komsomolets*, 5 July 1983.
[5] *Pravda*, 7 July 1984.
[6] Mentioned in *Komsomolskaya Zhizn*, 1984, No. 23, p. 29; 1985, No. 15, p. 12.
[7] Ibid. 1985, No. 15, p. 12.
[8] *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, 20 July 1985. Italics added by the editor of *Arkhiv Samizdata*.
[9] *Bulletin of the Ministry of Higher and Middle Specialized Education of the USSR*, 1985, No. 1, pp. 8–10.

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of forming a new vocal/instrumental group is to produce "a certificate permitting the right to perform in public;"
—the inadmissibility of independent organization of performances;
—the compilation of repertoires and programmes high in ideological content;
—strict control over "the broadcasting of musical variety programmes in places where student construction gangs are allocated, at rest centres, sports and health farms, students' and pupils' halls of residence, etc."

8. The resolutions of the assemblies of the Moscow Committee of the VLKSM of 7 September 1984 and of the Moscow City Committee of the VLKSM of 4 October 1984.[10]

9. The resolution of the office of the Moscow Committee of the VLKSM, "On improving the organization of work involving vocal/instrumental groups, discotheques, clubs for hobbies and amateur associations."[11]

10. A resolution of the Presidium of the VTsSPS (*Vsyesoyuzny Tsentralny Soviet Professionalnykh Soyuzov*—the All-Union Central Trade Union Council), "On the improvement of the ideological/artistic standard of the repertoires of amateur vocal/instrumental groups and discotheques provided for unions, and on the regulation of their organization and performances."[12]

11. Statute on sound recording studios, by the Ministry of Consumer Service of the RSFSR, "in which the aims of ideological/artistic instruction are stipulated in black and white; these should not be perverted by commercial interests."[13]

12. The decree of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the VLKSM and the board of the Ministry of Culture of the RSFSR, undated, "On the work of Komsomol committees and cultural organs in the Orlov province concerning regulation of activities of vocal/instrumental groups and the improvement of the ideological/artistic standard of their repertoires."[14]

THE registration of discotheques was apparently introduced at the beginning of the 1980s.[15] In 1982 the registered discotheques were

[10] *Moskovskii Komsomolets*, 12 Sept. and 10 Oct. 1984.
[11] Ibid. 27 Oct. 1984.
[12] *Trud*, 13 April 1985; decree dated "a few months ago."
[13] Ibid. Date of statute not given, but cf.: "*Now* the Ministry of Consumer Service, under whose jurisdiction recording studios fall, is taking measures to put them in proper order." *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, 6 Sept. 1984; italics added by the editor of *Arkhiv Samizdata*.
[14] *Komsomolskaya Zhizn*, 1985, No. 15, pp. 12–13.
[15] Probably between May and September 1980 the board of the USSR Ministry of Culture and the Secretariat of the VLKSM's Central Committee passed the resolution "On measures for the further improvement of the activities of amateur associations, clubs for hobbies and discotheques" (*Komsomolskaya Pravda*, 13 Sept. 1980 and 20 Oct. 1982), and "normative documents were approved." (Ibid.) Among these, apparently, was the Model Statute on amateur discotheques. On its approval by the USSR Ministry of Culture, the VTsSPS and the Central Committee of the VLKSM see *Trud*, 4 July 1981 and *Moskovskaya Pravda*, 29 Oct. 1983. On "the statute concerning the running of discotheques within

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forbidden to use programmes which had not been approved, and the unregistered ones were barred from functioning at all.[16] Then the "legal" amateur groups who performed at public catering establishments were ordered to join Associations of Musical Groups, organized in advance under the auspices of the cultural administrative bodies on city and provincial executive committees, in order "to regulate the work of ensembles in restaurants and cafés, to raise their professional standard and to refine their repertoires."[17] There was a fully worked out, approved repertory list for them, recommended for "performance by a collective . . ." From now on vocal/instrumental groups would "have the right to include songs by foreigners as up to 30 per cent of their repertory."[18] But only a few groups followed this course.

Other spontaneously performing groups were also obliged to come under the control of the cultural organs, apparently until the passing of the Central Committee of the CPSU's decree "On the further improvement of Party guidance by the Komsomol" (early July 1984), and after that decree, under the control of the Komsomol organs as well.[19] To achieve this it was necesssary to make a register of all of them throughout the country. The number of them was unknown. So, "according to the information of the Ministry of Culture of the USSR," "there are in fact 29,352 independent groups, involving 230,000 participants,"[20] but according to the journal *Smena*, in the whole country "there are only 160 registered electronic guitar groups," while there were only 145 registered professional groups.[21] Moreover, in the Moscow province there were

the Latvian SSR," approved by the Ministry of Culture of the Latvian SSR, see *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, 17 July 1982; on the analogous "statute" for the Estonian SSR, which came into force from 1 January 1982 (i.e. also passed in 1981) and which brought the independence of disc-jockeys to an end, set limits upon their activities depending on the categories of establishment involved, and outlined a plan for a survey of discotheques, etc. see *Noorte Hall*, Tallinn, 25 July 1982.

In January 1982 the Ministry of Culture of the USSR, the VTsSPS and the Central Committee of the VLKSM "passed a joint resolution," "On measures for the further improvement of the ideological/artistic standard of the work of discotheques" (*Komosomolskaya Pravda*, 20 Oct. 1982). It may be that this is the same as the decree of the board of the USSR Ministry of Culture, the Secretariat of the VTsSPS and the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the VLKSM of 1 February 1982, "On supplementary measures for the improvement of the ideological/artistic standard of the work of discotheques" (*Collected decrees of the VTsSPS*, 1982, Jan.–March, (Moscow, 1982), pp. 145–147; mentioned in *Trud*, 26 Sept. 1982), which states: "Many discotheque programmes, prepared for public performance, are not registered with the cultural organs, and rarely include works with patriotic, civil themes, the classical, contemporary Soviet music of the fatherland;" it is decreed: "to confirm a plan of measures to be taken for the further perfection of the activities of discotheques" (this will "not happen by accident.")

[16] Concerning Moscow there is the decree of the executive committee of the Moscow City Council, the presidium of the Moscow City Trade Union Council and the office of the Moscow City Committee of the VLKSM, of 3 Nov. 1982 (*Bulletin of the executive committee of the Moscow City Council*, 1982, No. 22, pp. 27–28; for references to the decree see *Moskovskaya Pravda*, ibid., and *Moskovskii Komsomolets*, 11 Nov. 1984).

[17] *Smena*, 1985, No. 4, p. 6, on the Minsk Association of Musical Groups. Cf. on the Alma-Ata Association of Musical Groups, *Sovetskaya Kultura*, 30 May 1985; on the Volgograd AMG, *Izvetiya*, 5 March 1985.

[18] *Moskovskii Komsomolets*, 8 Sept. 1984, on the Moscow AMG.

[19] Cf.: "Apparently the Komsomol is no longer concerned with discotheques, having handed their running over to the cultural administration entirely." *Moskovskaya Pravda*, 1 Nov. 1983.

[20] *Pravda*, 1 Oct. 1984.

[21] *Smena*, 1985, No. 4, p. 7; cf.: "There are *presently* 107 groups in the country's concert performance organizations, while two years ago there were about 300 of them. That is, all the rest were disbanded." (*Sovetskaya Rossiya*, 20 July 1985; italics added by the editor of *Arkhiv Samizdata*).

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more than 1,500 groups,[22] "but a third of them are not recommended, their programmes have never once been heard by the cultural organs nor by Komsomol activists";[23] in Byelorussia there were 2,000; in the Ukraine 14,000;[24] in Leningrad and the Leningrad province were 1,390, but "only 20 are reliable" for participation "in evenings of dancing at centres for cultural enlightenment;"[25] in Estonia were "more than 500 vocal/instrumental groups, among which are some mature collectives which act as the buttress of counter-propagandist activity, and there are others starting up which are increasingly exposed to a bad influence."[26]

Apart from the recommendations to obtain certification "permitting . . . performance in a mass auditorium,"[27] there are other means of registration and control of groups: the holding of competitions to decide "the best thematic scenario for discotheques," (June 1982–June 1983), "for the purpose of continued perfection of the work of discotheques, and for improvement of the ideological/artistic level of their programmes . . .,"[28] and also a "discotheques' display contest" (April 1983–February 1984), with more distinctly outlined ideological demands—"aiming to raise the ideological/artistic standards of discotheques to a higher level, and to increase *their role in communist education* and in the organization of leisure time for the workers which is *rich in content*, especially for young people . . ."[29] After this the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the VLKSM passed a resolution to hold an All-Union special "Musical Raid,"[30] "aimed at the struggle against low-grade music in places of public relaxation,"[31] with the formation, under the auspices of Komsomol committees, of permanent

[22] *Moskovskii Komsomolets*, 12 Sept. 1984.

[23] Ibid.

[24] *Smena*, ibid.

[25] *Sovetskiye Profsoyuzy*, Dec. 1984, No. 23, p. 12. Here there is mention of "amateur musical groups appearing spontaneously in people's flats, in public housing. With the help of the provincial Party committee, these groups were exposed. Their leaders were identified, some general meetings were held and a hearing of their programmes was organized". (An article by the director of the Inter-Union House of Amateur Creativity in Leningrad, A. Ivanova).

At the end of January 1985 some other figures were printed for Leningrad: 1,700 vocal/instrumental groups and approximately 150 discotheques. (*Trud*, 31 Jan. 1985).

[26] *Sovetskiye Profsoyuzy*, ibid. p. 13; i.e. the influence of "Western commercial music," which "reaches us by means of home-made tape recordings of radio and television broadcasts from abroad, and from records imported by tourists. We are struggling against this low-grade produce, above all by raising the ideological/artistic standard of our native repertories, and by increasing the special conditions available for professional composers, and we are widening the inter-republic exchange of programmes and individual works" (ibid. T. Rivis, director of the Estonian Inter-Union House of Amateur Creativity).

[27] *Trud*, 31 Aug. 1984.

[28] From the decree of the board of the USSR Ministry of Culture, the Secretariats of the VTsSPS and the Central Committee of the VLKSM of 16 Feb. 1982, "On the holding of a contest for the best thematic design for discotheques." (*Collected decrees of the VTsSPS*, 1982, April–June, (Moscow, 1982), pp. 135–137).

[29] From the analogous decree of 21 March 1983, "On the holding of a discotheques' display contest" (ibid. 1983, Jan.–March, (Moscow, 1983), pp. 134–137); italics added by the editor of *Arkhiv Samizdata*.

[30] On the decree see for example *Komsomolskaya Zhizn*, 1985, No. 15, pp. 12–13, 28–29; this may be the very same decree as is mentioned above, of 15 Aug. 1984.

[31] *Smena*, 1984, No. 23, p. 23.

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young people's "musical patrols."[32] These "musical patrols" (apparently first formed by the committee of the VLKSM in the city of Lvov)[33] encourage those active members of the Komsomol who know foreign languages to participate in the special raids, in order that the ideological direction of the music might be determined.[34] In April 1985 the "first public testimonial of amateur musical variety groups, which will in future take place twice a year,"[35] had to be completed.

As a result: "During the course of the past concert season the cultural organs have accomplished significant work in analyzing the creative activities of vocal/instrumental groups and in providing them with regulations. A number of groups were disbanded, while others were allotted a rehearsal period."[36] For example, in 1984 in the Ukraine an unknown number of groups were disbanded "because of low ideological/artistic standards,"[37] while in Uzbekistan, probably at the end of January 1985, "the board of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic adjudicated the testimonials of vocal/instrumental groups and discotheques. Only 48 discotheques stood up to the test. Only 11 clubs were given time to improve their programmes. 17 were disbanded. The rest (39—editor of *Arkhiv Samizdata*) avoided the testimonial."[38] Besides this, "because of a lack of designs and records, the work of *15 out of 18* discotheques in Fergana province was suspended," and "by a resolution of the commission many discotheques were closed down. Meanwhile there are rumours that the discontinued ones are continuing to function."[39]

[32] *Komsomolskaya Zhizn*, ibid. p. 13 Cf. on such raids on the sound recording studios in Krasnodar, *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, 7 April 1984.

[33] See *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, 17 July 1982, *Komsomolskaya Zhizn*. 1985, No. 1, p. 29; on methods of attraction employed by efficient Komsomol groups sent out by the City Committee of the VLKSM to operate in "punk" discotheques, etc., see ibid. No. 6, p. 28.

[34] *Moskovskii Komsomolets*, 8 Sept. 1984, Ib 2 August 1984 B. Ovcharov, a correspondent of the newspaper *Sovetskaya Rossiya* (in his article "pod pokrovom tsvetomusyki") wrote that "the Komsomol committees (of the Mordovian, Mariinsky and Chuvashsky ASSRs—editor of *Arkhiv Samizdata*) see it (a way out of the position regarding the discotheques and vocal/instrumental groups—editor of *Arkhiv Samizdata*) as the compulsory registration of discotheques, and tight control over their activities, by systematically listening to and approving their programmes. In Cheboksary for example they are considering establishing a city discotheque association, to which besides the recognized disc-jockeys, students from the local pedagogical institute who know foreign languages could come in order to translate popular foreign songs." Ovcharov suggests "that Komsomol leaders should be natural organizers and good, intelligent guides" for young people's leisure time.

[35] *Trud*, 13 April 1985.

[36] The leading article, "Towards new creative achievements under the guidance of the Party" (*Muzykalnaya Zhizn*, 11985, No. 10, p. 1.

[37] *Kultura i zhitya*, 11 Aug. 1985; cf. ibid. 7 April 1985.

[38] *Pravda Vostoka*, 3 Feb. 1985.

[39] Ibid.; italics added by the editor of *Arkhiv Samizdata*. On the various methods which the discotheques and vocal/instrumental groups resort to in order to overcome control, see ibid. 10 March 1985.

One discotheque in Tashkent was inspected (the inspection was carried out by the "raid brigade" with the assistance of the OBKhSS). It turned out that the discotheque was not being run according to the approved programme, that no one of those giving guidance to this hub of culture had ever listened carefully to what the foreign performers were yelling out of the loudspeakers. An examination revealed that on one of the tape recordings taken from the disc-jockeys (consequently one of the measures taken was the removal of "forbidden" tapes—editor of *Arkhiv Samizdata*) were songs of "ideologically harmful content, brought into the country illegally, corrupting the young." Ibid.

See also on banned discotheques and vocal/instrumental groups, and on the state of public committees

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ON the basis of an article entitled "A disc-jockey's grudge"[40] we shall try to reconstruct the instructions which regulate disc-jockeys' work:

1. Discotheques are "organized places of entertainment" ("and not some sort of 'private businesses'") "devoted to the organization of leisure time."[41]
2. "Detailed designs" for the programme are displayed in civic or regional departments of culture, with "the text of the proceedings set out, the musical works to be played listed, and the diversions described—games, competitions and quizzes (plus the records which will be played to accompany them)."[42]
3. "Only those works may be played in the discotheques which are either produced by the firm '*Melodiya*,' or which have been played on the Soviet radio or television . . . Besides these, records produced in socialist countries and sold in our country may be played in the discotheques."
4. In the case where "something has been published in a periodical newspaper about one song or another, and the song is available on a tape-recording, but has never been played on the radio or on television, nor produced by the firm '*Melodiya*,' the disc-jockey should submit the recording to the regional disco-club with a literal translation of the song, and after it has been approved he may use an excerpt from it . . . only a fragmentary excerpt." (Because of "the author's copyright on the use of foreign recordings for public performance.") This is exactly how "the admittance of the sort of Western musical products which teach alien morals and opinions is put to a stop."[43]

Alongside the prohibitive measures taken against discotheques and groups in 1984 there were also active "recommendations", dictating what should be happening in the discotheques. One of these methodological texts (possibly prepared by one of the scientific methodological centres in the provinces) is the "Organizer of disco-clubs and discotheques" ("a model for programmes for various categories of young people, including

M. Frankland's article; he also points out that in the Ukraine the number of professional vocal/instrumental groups decreased by half, and that now there are 40 of them (*Observer*, 7 April 1985). (More accurately there are 42: "four dozen variety groups" were broken up. *Dnipro*, 1985, No. 3, pp. 123, 126). "In the coastal area for example, every third group was disbanded, while in Mogilyev province 56 out of 169 ensembles listened to were broken up." *Trud*, 5 Feb. 1985; clearly, Frankland borrowed this information from *Trud* without referring to the source, and so came to inaccurate conclusions).

[40] *Komsomolets Zapolyarya*, Murmansk, 9 Oct. 1984. The same instruction is clearly discussed in the article "What is available for discotheques?" (*Sovetskiye Profsoyuzy*, Feb. 1985, No. 3, p. 15), on the discotheque in the town of Zelenograd, Moscow area.

[41] *Kultura i zhitya*, 7 April 1985.

[42] *Pravda Vostoka*, 3 Feb. 1985.

[43] It is possible that this document was the foundation for the "Statute on collective amateur discotheques," "recently resolved by the Ministry of Culture of the USSR, the VTsSPS and the Central Committee of the VLKSM;" its "content . . . should be familiar to every organizer of workers' relaxation (the statute is available at the regional scientific methodological centre)," *Kultura i zhitya*, 7 April 1985. It says in it that "discotheques can be established in cultural institutions only under the auspices of qualified guides, and each disco-collective, regardless of departmental subordination, will be subject to registration with the department of culture. Particular attention is drawn to the responsibility of the cultural organs for the quality and ideological/artistic standard of discotheque programmes." Ibid.

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methodological recommendations for their preparation"), which proposes "evenings at the discotheque, devoted to the role of the collective in manufacturing, or to the rules for traffic on the streets, or to perspectives on the development of the heavy goods vehicle industry . . ."[44] As a result of all this, discotheques are becoming non-existent.[45]

At present there has already been a call for a fight against these "provincial exaggerations." "Instead of putting the discotheques' musical repertories and the guests' behaviour into proper order some town administrators have simply closed down these young people's places of entertainment and relaxation."[46] This is discussed in a special decree of the Secretariat of the VLKSM's Central Committee, also by the board of the Ministry of Culture of the RSFSR, "On the work of Komsomol committees and organs of culture in the Orlov province in connection with the regulation of activities by vocal/instrumental groups and the improvement of the ideological/artistic standard of their repertories."[47] It is noted, on the one hand, that "beyond the range of view of the public testimonials undertaken by the commissions there remained the vocal/instrumental groups and discotheques active in educational establishments," and that "just as formerly, one does encounter ideologically harmful works by amateur rock groups and Western commercial bands within the repertories of vocal/instrumental groups and discotheques;" while on the other hand "the number of amateur musical variety groups was unjustifiably cut down by 30 per cent in state-established clubs," in connection with which it is proposed "not to allow vocal/instrumental groups and discotheques to be shut down without good reason."

Translated by Antonia Lloyd-Jones

[44] *Krokodil*, Jan. 1985, No. 2, p. 9.
[45] Ibid. This process was observed as early as 1983 (*Moskovskaya Pravda*, 1 Nov. 1983).
[46] *Krokodil*, ibid. Cf.: ". . . only those guides who hastened to break up groups have earned censure." *Pravda*, 13 June 1985.
[47] *Komsomolskaya Zhizn*, 1985, No. 15, pp. 12–13.

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Gorbachov Takes Charge: Prospects for Soviet Society

Elliot R. Goodman

WHEN all the speeches at the 27th Congress had been made, and the new Central Committee had been given their marching orders from the new Party leader, the Western press could not conceal a note of disappointment. After all, it had created an atmosphere of exaggerated hopes before the event.

It is often asserted that when Mikhail Gorbachov succeeded to the post of General Secretary of the CPSU in March 1985, following the death of Konstantin Chernenko, a new era began in the development of Soviet society. New leaders in their 50s were about to take over from geriatrics in their 70s, and presumably, new policy initiatives would be launched. But this is not entirely what has happened. In many respects Gorbachov has continued to pursue policies that were started under Andropov, who tried to put an end to the complacency of the Brezhnev era. Andropov's bold initiatives aimed at energizing Soviet society were only directly under his personal control for the first few months of his rule. When he fell seriously ill, Andropov turned to Gorbachov as his principal lieutenant and made him primarily responsible for implementing his experimental reforms and innovations. Following Andropov's death this brief period gave way to Chernenko's rule, but this also proved to be short-lived. After Chernenko's death and Gorbachov's nomination as Party General Secretary, the veteran Politburo member and Soviet Foreign Minister, Andrei Gromyko, revealed in his speech of 11 March 1985 to the Party Central Committee that Gorbachov had already been chairing the Politburo and determining Party policy during the long months of Chernenko's infirmity preceding his death. Gromyko praised Gorbachov's command of discussions within the Politburo: "Without any exaggeration he handled himself brilliantly. . . . . He always keeps in mind the essence of an issue, its contents and principles. He expresses his position clearly, whether the person he is talking to likes it or not, or perhaps does not entirely like it." In sum, Gorbachov has a "sharp mind and profound intelligence."[1]

After March 1985 it was not that the general direction of Soviet policy was new, but rather that Gorbachov was now supreme leader, not only *de facto* but also *de jure*. Within a remarkably short period General Secretary Gorbachov had forced the older generation of leaders, who were still trying to hang on, into retirement, and had also purged from

[1] Andrei Gromyko's Speech to the Plenary Session of the CPSU Central Committee, 11 March 1985, *Kommunist*, No. 5, March 1985, pp. 6–7. Dusko Doder of the *Washington Post* also reported that Gromyko added: "Comrades, this man has a nice smile, but he's got iron teeth." This sentence, then picked up in a number of other Western press accounts, is not in the *Kommunist* text.

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high Party and state posts members of his own generation who differed with him and whom he perceived as a potential challenge to his power. Simultaneously he replenished lower Party bodies with his own appointees, so that he could not be effectively challenged from any direction. Moreover, there was the prospect that barring some accident, he might continue as Soviet leader for the next 20 years or so. The successes and failures of the Soviet regime can now be placed firmly on his shoulders.

This changing of the guard was accompanied by Gorbachov's refreshing candour about what was wrong with Soviet society. Not that these ills were formerly unnoticed, but Gorbachov now added a measure of urgency to the matter of correcting them without pulling any punches. The crackdown on embezzlement, bribes, black marketeering, nepotism and other forms of corruption would be pursued even more vigorously than before. Alcoholism should be recognized as a pervasive and pernicious illness, to be attacked from all sides. Discipline should be increased to get truant workers to work punctually. In general the pressure on the entire labour force was to be intensified in order to raise productivity, which was acknowledged to be deplorably low, and to improve the shoddy workmanship typical of Soviet products of all kinds.

For the first time Gorbachov also spoke explicitly about the need to improve the quality of life. To accomplish this, goods and services for the consumer should be increased and, at the same time, improved in quality. He mentioned the need to eliminate the endless queues in front of shops not only by producing enough of what consumers wanted but also by providing a better quality of consumer goods and services, which had long been the most neglected aspect of Soviet society.

The state also needed to modernize all aspects of its industry which lagged behind the West, especially in the area of high technology. As Gorbachov repeatedly insisted, the key to success in remoulding the Soviet economy lay in the overriding need to improve technology. Evidently this involved more than replacing machinery, since he spoke sharply about the negative impact of the state bureaucracy, in particular its bloated middle levels, which had repeatedly sabotaged the best conceived plans for economic renewal by refusing to implement them.

In fact, there was so much wrong with the Soviet economy that one could start repairs almost anywhere. Doubtless Gorbachov can attack mismanagement of the Soviet economy with some success, since the mismanagement has been so pervasive that intelligent, vigorous leadership can yield short-term results at relatively low costs. But after these marginal gains have been made, then what? Then one runs up against the basic structure and political principles of the Soviet regime. How far will the new leadership be willing to go in order to achieve its proposed goals of renovation if such steps would require basic structural transformations that would alter the nature of the regime itself? At this point it is too early to make definitive judgments, although a brief review of Gorbachov's agenda might suggest some answers.

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LET us start with the problem of alcoholism. In June 1985 a new law decreed later opening and earlier closing hours for shops selling alcohol. Vodka production was cut back, and traditional vodka toasts at public social occasions were banned. The police stepped up its campaign to get drunks off the streets, and to increase penalties for drunkenness at work, since it was not uncommon for inebriated workers to fall into factory machinery. These measures will doubtless have an effect, but one should not conclude that deep-seated social and cultural patterns will be so easy to erase. How much private drinking will carry on as before? And more to the point, when will the deeper causes of drinking disappear: boredom, escapism from the hardships of daily life and a spiritual emptiness which cannot be filled by agitprop lectures on Marxism–Leninism?[2]

In his efforts to catch up with the West, Gorbachov has ordered the large-scale introduction of computers into secondary schools. These are presumably inexpensive models with rather limited capacities. He has also emphasized the need for increased use of more sophisticated machines, such as IBM personal computers, intended for workers in scientific institutes and in military establishments.

The use of personal computers presents the Soviet system with distinctly different problems from those it encountered when large mainframe computers were originally introduced. It was easy to control such large and unwieldy computers from centralized centres of operation. Ideologically this also reinforced the idea of centralized planning. But the dramatic leaps in computer capabilities in the industrial democracies (the West and Japan) which Gorbachov is hoping to emulate, sprang from developments in precisely the opposite direction. It is now accepted that the most efficient use of computers is on a decentralized basis, in which microcomputers can be used on their own for a wide range of purposes, or if more demanding tasks are required, they can be plugged into large computing centres that have much greater capabilities and can store an enormous amount of information in centralized data banks.

What would result from the Soviet adoption of this Western pattern? In industrial democracies the wide dispersal of personal computers which are almost always connected to a printer means that any individual user, in effect, has his own personal printing press. What would Gorbachov think of that? It is not necessary to speculate upon an answer, since the Soviet state has foreseen the spectre of mass *samizdat* literature flooding the country by requiring that access to computers should always be under state control, which could be exercised in various ways. Most computers would continue to be housed in large state controlled institutions, but even if they were not, they would operate under decentralized state control. Thus personal computers in homes would not have printers;

[2] Gorbachov must not only be able to uproot centuries-old Russian drinking habits, but to succeed where similar communist campaigns against alcoholism, beginning in 1917, have repeatedly failed. See David E. Powell, "The Soviet Alcohol Problem and Gorbachov's 'Solution,'" *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 8, No. 4, Autumn 1985, pp. 5–15.

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rather all printing would take place under the supervision of state centres which could not only print but also censor the printed results. Alternatively microcomputers could be connected to central computers which would be able to record all work done, and if the operator of a decentralized computer were to try to do work on his own by unplugging his machine from the central network, his personal computer would not function.[3]

Restrictions on the use of computers can doubtless be kept under state control, but Gorbachov will have to pay a high price for it. The explosion of computer literacy, especially amongst the younger generation, which is evident throughout the industrial democracies, has created an incredible, previously unimaginable development in an information society. Both mass production of computers, which has permitted economies of scale, and open competition amongst private computer manufacturers, have resulted in the wide-scale availability of sophisticated computers at affordable prices. The political restraints which the Soviet system imposes upon the development of a computer society will not only severely limit the dissemination of computer literacy amongst its population, but will also make the production of computers infinitely more expensive.

PROFESSOR Loren Graham of MIT, one of the most perceptive students of computer science, has drawn up a list of factors that influence the comparative receptivity of American and Soviet society to the introduction and use of computers. The US has a tradition that advanced technologies should be privately owned and controlled, if this is advantageous. Soviet tradition prohibits such individual control, and therefore minimizes the individual's influence on state policy. The computer revolution was started in the US by consumers making demands on manufacturers, who then innovated to satisfy individual needs. The US also has a tradition of free access to information. The Soviet mania for secrecy and zealous state control over information necessarily restricts those who use computers. It is not infrequent for US scientists to know more about Soviet society than their Soviet counterparts because of the rigid division of Soviet organizations into units with restrictions on the flow of information between them.

In the US much reliable and accurate data on a wide variety of subjects is accessible and can be fed into computers. The Soviet system frequently lacks such basic data, because the Soviet state does not publish information which might reveal embarrassing weaknesses in Soviet society; in addition managers of various enterprises, for example, might report false data in order to hide corruption or managerial ineptitude. The US has a broadly based financial network that facilitates private business activities, both in goods and services, enabling the rapid

[3] Loren R. Graham, "Science and Computers in Soviet Society," in Erik P. Hoffmann, (ed.), *The Soviet Union in the 1980s* (New York, 1984), pp. 129–30.

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transitions needed in a computer society. The Soviet Union has nothing comparable. Then there are practical considerations, such as the American tradition of "hands on" technological skills, including typing and computer programming, and the availability of excellent telephone lines that can be used for remote access to data bases. Soviet education is strong on theoretical mathematics but weak in the "hands on" technological skills, and Soviet telephone lines that can be used for high-speed data transmission are virtually non-existent. Since computers are difficult to keep in good condition, service contracts are usually built into the sales contract to keep time loss down to a minimum. In the Soviet Union such essential back-up services are notoriously poor. The relevant question to ask about Soviet computers is not how many there are, but rather how many there are in good working order at any given moment. Service industries have generally been on the lowest rung of Soviet economic priorities and this has meant that it is very difficult to get anything mended by going through official channels and the legal economy. To fill this gap a whole network of "moonlighters" has sprung up in the unofficial economy, who charge black market prices to repair almost anything, and usually with materials stolen from the state.

Finally, there is the central question of entrepreneurship and innovation which is basic to the development of new products on the cutting edge of high technology. Any American entrepreneur is free to try to develop a successful product which he can legally make, own, and sell. In the American computer business the fastest growing area is not the creation of ever newer models of computers, although this in itself is an astonishing phenomenon, but rather in the production of computer programming, or software, which is especially feasible for small, innovative enterprises to undertake. The record shows that the most imaginative software has not been produced by large organizations, but rather by small, high technology enterprises, which then sell their products to others, including the large organizations. On this basic but essential question of private enterprise, the contrast with the Soviet system could not be more stark. The Soviet Union simply prohibits the kinds of private enterprise discussed above.[4]

THE Soviet system operates through a centrally directed, planned economy, in which bureaucrats seek to make decisions on the central formation and central allocation of capital and raw materials. By definition such a ponderous process cannot be fast moving if it is to respond to the changing technological needs of the people on the lower levels of the individual scientific institutes, which themselves are creatures of the larger bureaucratic system. In the US economic system, as well as in those of other industrial democracies where similar traits are found to varying degrees, ideas, initiatives, and inventions are constantly bubbling up from below. In contrast, the Soviet system is designed to

[4] Ibid. pp. 131–32.

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operate from the top down, and it is infinitely more difficult to impose initiatives and inventiveness by state fiat from above.

If one reads the commentary by Soviet academicians on Gorbachov's plans for the expanded use of computers, the imperative that always emerges is the need to strengthen rule from the top down. Nikita Moiseev, an authority on the so-called "scientific–technical revolution," explains that the new "information technology gives us the possibility of a continuous check on how decisions are being carried out" with the result that "the real use of computers introduces regulation and control into every area."[5] This coincides perfectly with Gorbachov's demand to strengthen discipline over all aspects of society and to squeeze the work force in order to make it more productive. Nevertheless, the basic question remains: is it better to increase productivity by greater pressure from above, or by providing an atmosphere of freedom that nurtures inventiveness and innovation, which in turn result in technological inventions that will increase productivity?

Focusing attention on the computer industry merely illustrates the kinds of problems that are in general associated with the creation of any kind of high technology product. Gorbachov has repeatedly emphasized the need to give the Soviet Union all the high technology it needs. Speaking soon after assuming his post as General Secretary, he threw down the challenge: "What is needed is revolutionary change—a transition to fundamentally new technological systems, to the latest generation of technology, providing the very highest efficiency."[6]

The question is, how can Gorbachov accomplish this? It was apparent in the past that Soviet high technology, especially in the civilian economy, has not been generated with much success by Soviet reliance upon its own resources. The important exception has always been the Soviet military economy, which not only has priority in obtaining resources, but is also a much more flexible organization, free from many of the bureaucratic constraints which restrict the civilian sector; thus the military has been able to produce many of its own high technology items, to high standards of quality. The same high standard has never been achieved for products destined for the civilian economy. Moreover, there has been practically no overflow of scientific discoveries from the military technologies which might have some beneficial non-military applications.[7]

While Gorbachov has not indicated that the traditional military pride of place will be relinquished, his aim, if taken literally, is now to raise the

[5] Quoted in Victor Yasmann, "The Computerisation of Soviet Power," *Soviet Analyst*, Vol. 15, No. 1, 8 Jan. 1986, p. 7.

[6] *Pravda*, 24 April 1985.

[7] See Elliot R. Goodman, "The Brezhnev–Andropov Legacy: Implications for the Future," *Survey*, Vol. 28, No. 2, Summer 1984, p. 64. See also Ellen Jones, "Defense R&D Policymaking in the USSR," in Jiri Valenta and William Potter (eds.), *Soviet Decision making for Nation Security*, (London, 1984), p. 126: "The close involvement of military representatives at every stage of the design, development and production process ensures a measure of performer responsiveness to the MOD [Ministry of Defense] as consumer which is almost totally absent in the non-military sector of the Soviet economy. This difference helps to explain the remarkable contrast between the level of Soviet military and civilian technology."

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whole of Soviet society to a fundamentally new technological level based upon the latest and most efficient technology available.

Formerly, since the Soviet civilian economy was unable to provide its own innovative impulses, the easiest way for it to acquire high technology was to copy that of the industrial democracies. These imports arrived in the Soviet Union through legal purchase and through industrial espionage. However, the President of the USSR Academy of Sciences, A. P. Aleksandrov, has been frank in acknowledging the disadvantages of this approach.

> The paradox is that the blind copying of a foreign scientific or technical idea that is at the forefront at a given moment (or, more commonly, that was at the forefront yesterday) is often exactly what leads to falling behind. It is one thing to seek new solutions by taking advantage of all the best that exists in a given area in world science and practice. And it is quite another to become reliant on the accomplishments of others.
>
> It is saddening and discouraging to hear an executive in some area of economic management abruptly declare at some serious conference: "We don't make that equipment in our country." And he is referring to simple, perfectly accessible devices! What follows, as a result, is the purchasing abroad of equipment that has already been in production there for several years. And by the time we have bought it and got it running, it is already losing its advanced status. After all, technologies in the leading areas obsolesce in just four to six years![8]

Aleksandrov is correct when he points out that by merely importing or copying high technology from the industrial democracies the Soviet Union is sure to fall behind. However, he underestimates the rate at which the leading technologies are becoming obsolescent—four to six years is unrealistic. The technological innovations which the Soviet Union has been trying to copy are now being invented and marketed at an ever increasing rate, and some of the inventions, for example supercomputers under development in the US and Japan, represent a quantum leap in capabilities. Inevitably this means that the Soviet technological lag will become greater as the pace of innovation in leading technologies becomes faster.

Aleksandrov also fails to explain why the Soviet Union has fallen so far behind in the high technology race. He does not mention the systemic defects that are inherent in a centrally planned economy, which by its very nature is slow-moving, cumbersome, inflexible, filled with bottlenecks and, because it operates from the top down, discourages the autonomous, inventive impulses that could otherwise come to the surface from below.

The classic formula for raising the quality of any product is to force it to compete on the open market against all challengers. This is precisely what the Soviet planned economy has protected Soviet industry from having to

[8] *Izvestia*, 10 June 1985.

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do. Soviet exports to the developed industrial democracies have been raw materials for the outside world to make use of. However, Soviet industrial products are destined for home consumption as dictated by the economic plan, and the recipients of these products have no alternative but to accept them. With a guaranteed internal market there is very little incentive to improve upon their quality, or to try to match the higher quality of foreign manufacturers.

Gorbachov could, of course, seek to raise the technological level of Soviet industry by subjecting it to the shock treatment of open competition with foreign products. Predictably the cost of this policy would be the massive shutdown of Soviet industrial plants which would not be able to match the sophistication of the advanced technology produced on the world market. But even if this path were pursued gradually, the final outcome would still be an ever growing integration of the Soviet economy with the market economies in the non-Soviet world. In fact it would lead to the demise of the Soviet centrally planned economy and its replacement by a Western style market economy. Is there any doubt about Gorbachov's reaction to such a proposal? It would not only destroy the Soviet economic system, but would also undermine the basis of Soviet political culture, which insists that decision-making must be the monopoly of a centralized, omniscient, infallible Party elite. Such decisions could not be given up in favour of free market forces.

Gorbachov explicitly denounced the idea of losing control of the Soviet system to outside forces in a speech in June 1985, when he insisted that "the need to accelerate our development is dictated by the need to ensure the Soviet state's complete economic independence from the capitalist countries, above all in strategically important areas." While not proposing complete self-sufficiency, he emphasized that "we cannot permit our country to depend upon deliveries from the West."[9]

WE now seem to have come full circle. Since the Soviet system has been unable to generate sufficiently advanced technology by relying upon its own resources, it has turned to importing or copying these items from the industrial democracies. But this has proved to be the surest way to fall behind at an ever accelerating pace. Throwing the Soviet economic gates open to foreign competition is unacceptable both for economic and political reasons. What then remains is an essentially autarkic economic structure which has already been proved a failure.

Apparently Gorbachov thinks that he can break out of the past circle of failures by a thorough reorganization of the Soviet bureaucratic

[9] Gorbachov's Moscow speech of 11 June 1985, quoted in *Soviet World Outlook* (Advanced International Studies Institute, USA), 15 July 1985, p. 3. Gorbachov's chief economic advisor, Abel Aganbegyan, explained Soviet trade policy more fully. Important changes were required "to make export and import trade more progressive. A mutually advantageous division of labour, primarily within the socialist community, is a realistic way to enhance the efficiency of production. Of the utmost importance is complete economic independence from the capitalist powers along strategic lines, and invulnerability to the discriminatory measures to which the US and some other countries resort." *World Marxist Review*, Vol. 28, No. 9, Sept. 1985, p. 20.

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structure. This would be designed to give fresh impulses both to the very top and very bottom levels, while refashioning the bureaucratic layers in between.

B. P. Kurashvili, head of the sector on theory of state management at the USSR's Academy of Sciences Institute of State and Law, explains the double-barrelled approach towards the top and bottom levels. "The state's centralized regulation of economic life is concentrated mainly on the resolution of strategic questions, and it is growing stronger within this framework. On the other hand democratic principles are gaining scope, which are expressed above all in the development of forms of socialist self-management."[10] Gorbachov then personally endorsed this formula: "The essence of the restructuring is to raise the efficiency of centralism in management and planning [and] to expand the independence and responsibility of enterprises."[11] These pronouncements of mid-1985 left no doubt about the Soviet regime's continued attachment to central economic planning, with all that this implies, although it might now assume a somewhat different form.

The bottom economic layers would also assume a number of new functions. In agriculture family-sized contract teams or brigades would be free to make flexible arrangements with collective farms on a local level in order to perform services and be rewarded on the basis of incentive, according to their output. Soviet economists frankly acknowledge that the system of such brigades would not work well in poor crop years, and in order to avoid this hardship many peasants are trying to obtain guaranteed premium pay, whatever the harvest, which would remove the brigades' incentive to achieve greater output at cheaper costs. In addition it is by no means clear how the management of an entire agro-industrial complex can create a flexible price scale to accommodate this form of free enterprise. Soviet economists have also reported that when the brigade system was introduced into industry it encountered a number of difficulties and has only yielded mixed results.[12]

On the industrial side, Gorbachov has repeatedly emphasized the need to intensify the use of existing plants by modernizing them instead of putting resources into extensive new construction. Enterprise managers will be given the power to retain profits for investment in new productive equipment, for the workers' social and cultural benefits and for bonuses to reward efficient workers. But are financial incentives alone at the enterprise level enough to ensure that new investment will produce the desired results? Soviet plant managers will still be unable to assure deliveries of essential supplies, since Gossnab, the state supply organization, will continue as before to allocate materials from the centre. The chief theorist of Soviet state management insists that the

[10] B. P. Kurashvili, *Ekonomika i organizatsia promyshlennogo proizvodstva*, No. 5, May 1985; quoted in *Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, Vol. 37, No. 41, p. 2.

[11] *Pravda*, 12 June 1985.

[12] On the brigades in agriculture, see Valery Gavrichkin, *Izvestia*, 20 Oct. 1985. On the brigades in industry, see Tatyana Zaslavskaya, *Sovetskaya Rossia*, 7 Jan. 1986, Nina Maksimova, *Ekonomika i organizatsia promyshlennogo proizvodstva*, No. 8, 1985; quoted in *CDSP*, Vol. 38, No. 2, pp. 1–4, 8.

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centre will continue to inform "enterprises of its intention to encourage the production of certain types of outputs with its resources (centrally allocated materials, tax abatements, credits, etc.)."[13] In theory Gorbachov's new forms of decentralization are designed to help attain his central goals, but here is one example (and there are surely many others) where the initiative given to local enterprise managers can be effectively negated by the central organs that will continue to control the materials needed to implement local enterprise initiatives.

Gorbachov has also proposed the elimination of the low level bureaucracy comprised of "production associations," which perform pen-pushing functions between the ministries and the enterprise managers. This would create a direct link between the ministry and local enterprises, which presumably will increase efficiency, as well as enhancing the autonomy of the factory manager. It is conceivable that strengthening this link might, in practice, turn out to limit the autonomy of the enterprise manager, as was sometimes the case in the Liberman reforms of the mid-1960s, when a similar experiment was tried. Then "despite instructions to refrain from interfering with the firms involved in the Liberman reforms, the ministries intervened." The ministries either did not trust the market signals that guided the enterprise manager or insisted that he produce something he no longer wanted to produce because the market indicated he should no longer do so.[14] There is also the other side of the coin, namely, that some enterprise managers, long accustomed to running their plants on orders from above, may be hesitant in assuming new responsibilities that require initiative and innovation. The Soviet system of education and political socialization, which has valued and rewarded conformity while it has punished initiative and risk-taking, has not well-prepared many to think and act as innovators.

Since 1985 Gorbachov has also permitted a limited experiment with increasing the efficiency of the service sector of the economy by legalizing selected parts of the black market. A television repair shop in Estonia, for example, has been allowed to retain its earnings, which are distributed among the workers, once the shop has paid 35 per cent of its receipts to the state. Now repairs are made quickly and politely, in contrast to the endless delays and rude treatment formerly encountered in state operated shops, or the alternative of trying to find such a service *na levo*, on the black market at inflated costs.[15] It will be very interesting to watch to what extent Gorbachov will be willing to legalize private enterprise in the name of efficiency, since each such step impinges upon the socialist ideology of a state monopoly over the entire economy.

PERHAPS the most dramatic instances of encouraging private enterprise within the framework of the socialist state are the

[13] Kurashvili, op. cit. p. 3.

[14] Marshall I. Goldman, *USSR in Crisis: The Failure of an Economic System* (New York, 1983), pp. 50–51.

[15] Philip Taubman, "To Inspire Better Work, Estonia Tries New Lures," *New York Times*, 21 Jan. 1986.

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shabashniki, teams or brigades of temporary labour, sometimes migrant or seasonal in nature, who contract to do difficult work which others are reluctant to undertake, or to finish jobs quickly that might not otherwise be completed on time. They are rewarded for their strenuous labour on a pay scale considerably above that of the ordinary worker. Numerous tales abound about the *shabashniki*, both in agriculture and industry, each with a different twist, but all of them seem to have the common thread of a confrontation between the initiatives undertaken by these free spirits on the one hand and compulsion of the state authorities to bring them under their bureaucratic controls on the other. These working arrangements, begun under his recent predecessors, have been used more widely under Gorbachov.

Perhaps one example of this contractual arrangement might illustrate the problems it entails. A group of migrant Armenian *shabashniki* made a contract with a collective farm chairman to build a road for the purpose of efficiently transporting its beet crop to the refinery during the rainy season. The road was built and everyone agreed that its economic benefits more than repaid the high wages of the *shabashniki.* But then the state authorities stepped in. They objected that the workers had not built a farm road, but a state road. This violated state laws since the *shabashniki* had engaged in private enterprise under the cover of collective farm activity. The *shabashniki* were tried and given long prison sentences and the collective farm manager was also given a prison sentence, although he was later granted amnesty.

Gorbachov has spoken a great deal about stimulating initiative on the local level, but here initiative was equated with breaking the law. When this case was described in the Soviet press, *Izvestia* commented: "We keep speaking more loudly of the role of economic initiative—but where are the criteria by which to judge whether initiative is good or bad? The end result? But that, as the criminal investigators explained, isn't a 'legal argument'." The state bureaucracy, ever resentful of any attempt to evade its control, dismissed efforts to stimulate economic incentives and increase productivity as irrelevant, since this was an economic and not a legal argument. Clearly, the protection of its legal prerogatives took priority over the benefits of increased productivity.[16]

In contrast to Gorbachov's pledge to infuse new life into the top and bottom levels of the bureaucratic structure, in the belief that this will raise their efficiency and encourage productivity, he has only directed his wrath at the overblown, unwieldy, ineffective middle bureaucracy. It is essential, Gorbachov has demanded, to improve the integration and concentration of management "where the number of ministries and departments is too great and getting bigger." This places on the agenda "the question of creating bodies to manage the big economic complexes.

[16] Patrick Murphy, "Soviet *Shabashniki*: Material Incentives at Work," *Problems of Communism*, Vol. 34, No. 6, Nov.–Dec. 1985, pp. 56–57.

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The role and functions of the ministries should change in the new condition."[17]

Abel Aganbegyan, the former director of the Siberian division of the USSR's Academy of Sciences Institute of Economics and Organization of Industrial Production, focused on the bureaucratic structure necessary to introduce the new technological systems which are of such great interest to Gorbachov. It was from this institute that his colleague, Tatyana Zaslavskaya, issued her by now famous Novosibirsk Report with its scathing attack upon the bloated Soviet middle bureaucracy.[18] Subsequently Aganbegyan was promoted to Chairman, Commission for the Study of Productive Forces of the Presidium of the USSR Academy of Sciences. In his opinion, the new technological processes are all interrelated from start to finish. Consequently, it will only make sense

> to assign the development and introduction of complete technological economic systems to large research and production associations, which will have to be set up under a single authority by combining research organizations, experimental production facilities, a number of series-plants and organizations for putting new equipment into production and supervising its installation. Let us add to this repair and service centres and centres for retraining personnel.[19]

How do all these economic systems, production associations, research and design organizations, production plants, repair and service centres, "which will have to be set up under a single authority," satisfy Gorbachov's complaint about ministries and departments which are "too great and getting bigger"?

Similarly, Soviet chief management theorist Kurashvili explains that Gorbachov's decision to raise the efficiency of central management and planning, which would continue to be lodged in the State Planning Committee (Gosplan), would become more effective since this agency "would be relieved of most routine management functions." Such management functions would then devolve upon a new gigantic ministry.

> It would be advisable to create a single Ministry of the National Economy to manage the greater part of material production—industry (with the exception of certain branches), construction and agriculture. On the face of it, such a ministry, even if it were gigantic, would not seem to be able to manage our vast economy. But, whereas under the old system of management the scope of this task would be an insurmountable obstacle, under the new system it is, on the contrary, a positive factor, since it provides plenty of room for interaction and manoeuvring.

This single ministry, indeed a super ministry, would be accompanied by the formation of a huge Ministry of Supply, Procurement and Trade,

[17] *Pravda*, 12 June 1985.
[18] Tatyana Zaslavskaya, "The Novosibirsk Report," *Survey*, Vol. 28, No. 1, Spring 1984, pp. 88–108.
[19] *Pravda*, 13 June 1985.

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which would have jurisdiction over "the material and technical supply of production and would draw them closer to trade."[20] In short, it would seem that the problem of an overblown, massive, ineffective bureaucracy would be solved by dissolving the old one and creating a new one in its place. Are these not more steps, perhaps taken at a faster pace, on the endless treadmill of Soviet economic reforms that have been going on during the entire post-Stalinist period?

If there are not to be any major structural changes in the Soviet economic system, such as the decollectivization of agriculture and the introduction of major market mechanisms into industry, how then does Gorbachov intend to achieve his ambitious goals? In a modest way he aims to encourage private initiative on the local level by offering monetary incentives, both in agriculture and industry, but it seems quite clear that these manifestations of "private enterprise" will be kept well within the bounds of his centrally directed economy. There are no hints here that some variety of economic pluralism might arise, which will in turn encourage political pluralism, as happened in the Prague Spring of 1968.

IF one were pressed to reduce Gorbachov's new programme to a single word it would be "discipline," which indeed is found in all of his major pronouncements. His intensified crackdowns on alcoholism, absenteeism, the waste of raw materials and corrupt practices, all of which undermine the efficient operation of the Soviet system, are part of his overall design to squeeze more and better production out of the workers. The key to success of his programme rests not upon liberal reforms, but upon applying a sterner discipline than his immediate predecessors. Even in the case of the greater latitude given to workers on the local level, his instruments of control may well have to be strengthened, along with his incentive programmes, in order to be sure that they do not undermine his own political power.

Above all, Gorbachov will protect his own position of power. In his very first public pronouncement of 11 March 1985, in which he accepted his position as Party General Secretary, Gorbachov declared: "Comrades, the solution of the complex tasks confronting us presupposes the further strengthening of the Party and a rise in its organizing and

[20] Kurashvili, op. cit. pp. 5, 17. Although not on quite the grandiose scale suggested by Kurashvili, the first concrete steps in the process of amalgamating ministries appeared in *Pravda* on 23 November 1985. It announced the abolition of the USSR Ministries of Agriculture, of Fruit and Vegetable Farming, of Meat and Dairy Industry, of the Food Industry, of Rural Construction, and the USSR State Committee for the Supply of Production Equipment to Agriculture, and the creation in their place of what *Pravda* called a "new super agency," the USSR State Agro-Industrial Committee. This Committee was also assigned a wide array of functions that formerly belonged to three other ministries. In addition, three more ministries and the State Forestry Committee, plus the Central Union of Consumers' Cooperatives were all placed under the jurisdiction of the State Agro-Industrial Committee so that they could be "planned and financed as a single whole." Finally, four other ministries responsible for various types of farm machinery, fertilizers, medical and microbiology products were ordered to "coordinate closely their work with the USSR State Agro-Industrial Committee," which will be the "central agency for the management of the country's agro-industrial complex."

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guiding role."[21] And again three months later, when outlining some of his projected innovations, he repeated: "We must intensify the Party's influence on the whole course of scientific and technical progress, and strengthen the Party stratum in the decisive sectors."[22] The Party will, indeed, preside over the transformation of Soviet society. But this transformation will most likely consist of changes at the margin, rather than a remedy for the basic structural deficiencies of the system, which will continue to obstruct solutions to their problems.

Would it be possible for a huge country, ruled by a communist party, to undertake a fundamental, far-reaching structural transformation which would permit it to refashion and unleash its basic productive forces and to improve substantially the welfare of its people? In recent years China has been engaged in just such a dramatic venture, on such an enormous scale that it is still far from being finished. However, enough has transpired to allow one to make some tentative judgments.

THE scope and pace of change in China can be appreciated if one considers the policies of Mao Zedong and the conditions of life that existed in China at the time of his death in September 1976. The fanatical pursuit of Mao's radical ideological principles, exhibited in the "Great Leap Forward" experiments of 1958–59, his Socialist Educational Campaign of 1963–65, and finally in the convulsions of the Cultural Revolution of 1966–76, had brought China almost to the edge of disaster.

Mao's emphasis on the supremacy of ideology, expressed in his slogan "Red over Expert," led to the expulsion from positions of authority of those who possessed the education, training and the general competence to run society upon rational principles. The result was that whole cadres of skilled administrators, educators, scientists, intellectual leaders, and any others who might be considered "experts" were either sent to prison or to the degradation of menial labour on communal farms. The excesses of the Cultural Revolution were also associated with the ruthless behaviour of the Red Guards, often little more than gangs of teenage thugs, who terrorized the population and wantonly expropriated or destroyed many of the treasures which had been preserved over the millennia of Chinese civilization.

China's economic programme before Mao's death was greatly influenced by the Soviet model: a command economy based on central economic planning and a Stalinist strategy of forced-pace development of heavy industry, known in China as "the big push." By the time of Mao's death the economy was in a disastrous state, and public services, such as education, were in chaos. It had become obvious to many that there was little room left for manoeuvre if China were to proceed along these same lines. Faced with such elemental problems, for example, as trying to feed a billion people, catastrophe loomed as a real possibility.

[21] *Pravda*, 12 March 1985.
[22] Ibid. 12 June 1985.

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For nearly a year after Mao's death his legacy was the subject of bitter factional struggles within the Communist Party of China, until it became clear in the summer of 1977 that Deng Xiaoping and his supporters had emerged victorious. Deng's policies, embodied in the documents of the historic Third Plenum of the Party's 11th Central Committee of December 1978, set the direction for a new course. Deng's plan, not yet worked out in detail and still undecided in many areas of policy, nonetheless clearly signalled the victory of "Expert over Red," of the precedence of pragmatism over ideology, and along with it a repudiation of the Soviet economic model. In short, Deng's remedies envisioned more than mere tinkering with a failed system; rather, they introduced basic structural transformations of important sectors of Chinese society, both in the cities and in the countryside.

Agriculture was the first sector to be transformed, perhaps because it was the easiest place to start. From December 1978, step by step, Party documents granted increasing autonomy, material incentives and flexibility to individual peasants and peasant households. These reforms, called the "responsibility system in agriculture," rapidly decollectivized communal agriculture and renewed the peasant household as the basic unit of production. The Maoist flow of commands from the top down was replaced by contract relationships entered into between the peasant households and production teams, which rewarded the peasants in accordance with their own initiative and work performed. That is, the profit motive has replaced the decrees of the command economy.

In the case of such major crops as grain and cotton, the old pattern of the state planning and buying the crop in its entirety was replaced by state purchase of only fixed portions of the crop. Beyond that the peasants were left free to sell the remainder on the open market at floating prices. If he wishes, the peasant does not have to deal with the state at all and is free to live entirely on the private economy.

THE results of decollectivization have been astonishing. Each year between 1978 and 1984 the peasants have increased food production by about 8 per cent, which is about 2.5 times the rate in the preceding 26 years. The variety of food produced has increased along with quantity, so that the Chinese diet, on average, appears more likely to supply the population with enough energy and protein for a healthy life.[23] Some crops have expanded faster than others. In the 1978–84 period cotton output increased by 150 per cent.[24] In 1984 China produced 407 million tons of grain as compared with 304 million in 1978.[25] These results came not from an increase in the area of land cultivated but from the peasant's

[23] George J. Church, "Deng Xiaoping Leads a Far-reaching, Audacious but Risky Second Revolution," *Time*, 6 Jan. 1986, p. 30.

[24] Joseph Fewsmith, "Rural Reform in China: Stage Two," *Problems of Communism*, Vol. 34, No. 4, July–Aug. 1985, p. 49.

[25] Assembly of Western European Union, "Developments in China and European Security," Document 1035, 5 Nov. 1985, p. 4.

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intensive labour. Comparing the period 1973–78 with 1978–83, the rate of growth of grain production as well as the yield per hectare have both doubled.[26] The average annual per capita income of the peasants nearly tripled during the period between 1978 and 1984.[27]

In January 1985 the state launched another set of agricultural reforms that allow the peasants to produce more in accordance with market demands by increasingly removing state controls over prices and procurement.[28] One result of this was a drop in 1985 grain production, partly as a result of bad weather, but also because the peasants changed the use of some of the land to produce higher-paying cash crops. This did not seriously threaten the availability of grain, while the value of agricultural output in 1985 increased by 10 per cent over 1984 and the average peasant's income rose by 12.6 per cent.[29] The state also benefited from a more prosperous peasantry, since it was able to reduce its burdensome subsidies to the countryside.

One especially profitable and productive form of agriculture which has grown rapidly in recent years involves peasant households that agree to specialize in some agricultural product or service which the state finds in short supply. The state also seeks to train skilled farmers who can develop the potential of the land through the application of science and technology. Here again the specialized peasant household is the principal vehicle. At the end of 1984 there were 25 million specialized households constituting 14 per cent of the rural population.[30]

While the state retains ownership of the land, the peasant household is given the incentive to invest in its development through long term leases, usually drawn up for 15 years, although in some special cases they run from 30 to 50 years. To provide increased stability for these relationships, the leases are not only renewable but can be inherited. The peasant household which possesses the lease can subcontract its land for a fee, hire labour and buy its own farm machinery. When in need of capital to develop its holding, it can borrow from the age-old but un-Marxist private money lender. Likewise, these practices apply when the land holdings of several households are combined for extensive agriculture, where large operations require sizable pieces of land. In effect, some peasant households have set up a form of large-scale private farming.

[26] Kenneth R. Walker, "Chinese Agriculture During the Period of the Readjustment, 1978–83," *China Quarterly*, No. 100, Dec. 1984, p. 789.

[27] The increase was from 133 yuan in 1978 to 355 yuan by 1984. Wang Dacheng, "Will Peasants Be Polarized by Changes?" *Beijing Review*, Vol. 28, No. 46, 18 Nov. 1985, p. 4.

[28] Fewsmith, op. cit. p. 48.

[29] The reduction of the grain harvest in 1985 was 25 million tons below 1984. This approximated the 1983 grain harvest, which was considered a bumper year. The state also had ample grain reserves. Half of the decrease in 1985 resulted from severe flooding in three provinces in north-eastern China and a drought in three other provinces, including Sichuan, which had traditionally been an important source of grain. The other half of the 1985 shortfall resulted from peasants changing the use of their land to produce more profitable cash crops. Dai Yannian, "Reform Logs Sound Results," *Beijing Review*, Vol. 29, No. 6–7, 10 Feb. 1986, p. 4; Vice-Premier Tian Jiyan, "On the Present Economic Situation and Restructuring the Economy," ibid. p. iv.

[30] Fewsmith, op. cit. p. 52.

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China now has the phenomenon of the "rich peasant," or more precisely, the rich peasant household. This stands in striking contrast to the rigid egalitarianism of Mao. As Vice-Premier Tian Jiuan explained: "On the question of prosperity, it will not do to practice egalitarianism." Incentives are tied to the rewards of high incomes and pay differentials. Ultimately, everyone will presumably have a higher standard of living, and the state will seek gradually to narrow the income gap. However, "achieving common prosperity does not mean becoming simultaneously well-off or enjoying the same level of affluence. Historical lessons tell us that seeking equal prosperity for everyone at once will only engender egalitarianism and common poverty."[31]

Finally, the state has encouraged the peasantry to engage in private enterprise in the form of sideline businesses (restaurants, shops, consumer services, etc.) and to set up privately or collectively owned rural industries, at first small but recently larger in size. The peasant can keep any profits from these businesses, which often compete with big state-run factories in the cities. Such dynamism has been injected into the entire rural economy that a new population flow has been observed:

> Today, rural people no longer dream of moving to the cities to better their lives, or to get what cannot be had in the countryside. On the contrary, many urban factory workers are now asking to be transferred to rural factories. The tide of rural flight, therefore, is not only being stemmed, but is on its way to being reversed.[32]

Surely China is the only country in the Third World of which this can be said.

SIMILARLY dramatic and complex transformations have occurred in urban areas, which have also reversed Mao's efforts to eliminate all vestiges of capitalism. Starting on a small scale and at a later date than the agricultural reforms, the state followed the same general policy of encouraging private initiative to create small, privately owned and operated shops. In addition, a whole range of buying, selling and trading activities previously forbidden have now sprung up in the private sector. The common goal is the pursuit of private profit.

The privately or collectively owned light industries which operated outside the scope of the state plan grew faster than state enterprises, so that by 1984 20 per cent of all industrial output came from non-state firms. The remaining 80 per cent that continued under state control included the country's basic, large-scale industries, such as iron, steel, coal, transport and energy. Thus the principle of state ownership of the major means of production was retained. Some centralized controls were also retained to varying degrees in finance, taxation and other key areas of economic activity.

[31] Tian Jiuan, op. cit. pp. xi–xii.
[32] Xue Muqiao, "Rural Industry Advances Amidst Problems," *Beijing Review*, Vol. 28, No. 50, 16 Dec. 1985, p. 18.

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The behaviour of Chinese state enterprises, however, is sharply different from the equivalent in the Soviet Union. In the place of a centrally planned economy, the plan in China is viewed merely as a guideline, and the managers of state enterprises must learn to behave according to the capitalist rules of making profits and avoiding losses. The factory manager is no longer judged on output quotas, since the quality of his goods will be reflected in his profit balance. This permits a consumer economy to arise, because the factory must now produce more of what the consumer demands. The state enterprises also have elaborate profit-sharing plans, which vary according to the nature of the enterprise. The enterprise director can also hire and fire workers, and even discharge Party secretaries and other factory directors who have been responsible for unprofitable operations. Moreover, unprofitable enterprises can be shut down completely. All these measures involve decentralized economic decisions based upon market forces.[33]

Here the contrast with Soviet state industries run in accordance with a centrally directed plan is clear. Huan Xiang, President of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, summed up the Chinese view of Soviet central planning under Gorbachov. Its effects have

> seriously hampered the initiative and creativity of enterprises and workers and to a great extent emasculated what would otherwise have been a vigorous economy. The more centralized, the more rigid; the more rigid, the lazier the people; the lazier the people, the poorer they are.[34]

In place of Mao's rigorous blueprint of socialism with its priority on heavy industry and production for production's sake, the goal of Deng's pragmatic mix of socialism and capitalism has been production in order to improve the people's standard of living. More balanced economic growth with higher priority for consumption has not only raised levels of personal consumption but greatly increased workers' productivity, and has resulted in an overall growth in industrial production which has generally kept pace with food production.[35] During the period of the sixth Five Year Plan between 1981 and 1985, China's total industrial output value rose on average by 10.6 per cent per year, with an estimated increase in value of 65.2 per cent in 1985 over that of 1980.[36] In an enormous undertaking which involves the transformation of the Chinese way of life many problems remain unsolved. Nevertheless life, both in rural and urban China, is undeniably getting better.

[33] Robert F. Dernberger, "China's New Economic Development: Problems and Prospects," in Norton Ginsberg and Bernard A. Lalor, (eds.), *China: The 80s Era* (Boulder, CO and London, 1984), pp. 132–4.

[34] Quoted in Church, op. cit. p. 31.

[35] Dernberger, op. cit. pp. 125–7. In foreign policy Deng also reversed Mao's complete isolation of China from the outside world by actively seeking access to Western science and technology, and by creating a number of Special Economic Zones to attract foreign lending and investment, including joint ventures with foreign companies in which ownership is shared with foreign capitalists.

[36] Tian Jiuan, op. cit. p. iv.

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WOULD Gorbachov be likely to launch the kinds of basic structural changes in the Soviet Union which have propelled Deng's China forward with such astonishing speed? Here one must look at the concrete historical circumstances that existed in each country. At the end of Mao's rule, especially the last decade of 1966–76, when the trauma of the Cultural Revolution produced chaos and semi-paralysis in China, precisely the opposite condition existed in the domestic life of the Soviet Union, where society was gripped by the stolid, if not soporific, atmosphere of Brezhnev's stability. Therefore when changes of great magnitude were required in both countries, it was easier for Deng to make them than for Gorbachov. In the apt phrase of one scholar, while the Soviet Union has been spared the trauma of China, "in the long run this good fortune may actually impede Gorbachov's efforts at meaningful change. In other words, the Soviet Union might have been better off if it had been worse off."[37]

Finally, there is a need to look briefly at important changes in the Chinese Communist Party and to consider the effects this might have on the Soviet Party and the world communist movement. Under Deng the Chinese Communist Party has consciously exercised self-restraint over its formerly deep penetration of power into every aspect of society. By elevating expert over red more authority has been put in the hands of the autonomous decision-makers at all levels of the economy. Peasants and factory managers are governed more by market forces, instead of Party edicts. Advancement in educational and scientific institutions comes from scientific training and technological expertise, not from Party membership. The result has been to leave many Party functionaries without meaningful functions. As its former ambitions of total control have receded, the Party has become less totalitarian. To some extent it has also tried to coopt members of the new economic elite into its ranks in order to offset this loss of control. This new blood will also help shape a new kind of Party that will be relieved of Maoist ideological fanaticism.

The Party has been more reluctant to loosen its control over cultural and intellectual life. The initial period following Deng's accession to power in July 1977 led many intellectuals to demand the free expression of ideas as part of the movement to discard the Maoist style of rule. For several years political liberalization was in vogue, but in 1979 Deng began to clamp down on the many manifestations of free expression, and by 1981 the "Democracy Movement" was smashed.[38]

Several factional struggles within the Party might help explain this development. The liberals directed their fire in the first instance at Hua Guofeng, who had inherited Mao's post as Chairman of the Chinese Communist Party, and who stood for a continuation of Mao's policies.

[37] Marshall I. Goldman, "Gorbachev and Economic Reform," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 64, No. 1, Fall 1985, p. 58.

[38] Tang Tsou, "Political Change and Reform: The Middle Course," in Ginsburg and Labor, (eds.), op. cit. pp. 31–48; Robin Munro, "China's Democracy Movement: A Midwinter Spring," *Survey*, Vol. 28, No. 2, Summer 1984, pp. 70–98.

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Deng found it useful to let the democratic reformers speak without inhibitions until Hua's demise. In August 1980, Deng forced Hua's resignation as Premier, and in July 1981 Hua stepped down as Chairman of the Party. Finally at the 12th Party Congress in September 1982, Deng entirely abolished the position of Chairman of the Party. On the other hand, Deng had to pacify the conservative bureaucracy upon whom he was reliant in order to implement his ambitious programme for economic and social reforms, and the Democracy Movement was one of the sacrifices made in the name of workable Party unity.[39]

Deng had to perform a difficult balancing act designed to rein in extremes of ideological dissent while keeping the Party from slipping back into the excesses of the Cultural Revolution. The liberals reintroduced some of their ideas into the new Party Constitution, which was also adopted by the September 1982 Party Congress. The Party Constitution sanctioned the adoption of an electoral system in which there are more candidates than positions to be filled and a complicated two-step system of election to the Party Central Committee which provides greater freedom of choice.[40] Professor Tang Tsou of the University of Chicago concluded, perhaps somewhat optimistically, that "the idea of maintaining a modicum of checks and balances within a single organ or among institutions has been partially accepted."[41] It is difficult to confirm from afar the extent to which provisions on paper are actually being implemented, or to speculate on how far the Party, which continues to monopolize political power and is built on Leninist principles, will be able to move towards liberalizing itself. It is clear that Deng has been successful in correcting many of the excesses of Maoism and in limiting the arbitrary abuses of power.

China watchers know from experience that they must be modest in their predictions. It may be that Deng will live, as he has vowed to do, to see the transfer of Hong Kong from Britain to China in 1997, at which point he will be 93 years old. However, anticipating his death, Deng has been working steadily to appoint his protégés, including "youngsters" in their 50s and 60s, to all leading positions. Perhaps there will be a smooth transition of power and continuation of Deng's programmes, or perhaps events will be shaped by some entirely unpredictable scenario.

IN any event what Deng has already accomplished cannot be ignored by the Soviet Party under Gorbachov, nor by the other communist parties in the world communist movement. Deng's China, founded on a pragmatic market socialism, with a number of explicitly un-Marxist elements in it, seems to be working in an underdeveloped country with a huge population where life is visibly improving. This experience may well become an increasingly attractive model for other Third World

[39] Tsou, op. cit. pp. 34–5; Munro, op. cit. pp. 72, 95.
[40] Tsou, op. cit. p. 29.
[41] Ibid. p. 60.

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communist parties, which might identify more closely with China than the Soviet Union. Officially, the Chinese communists insist that they are good Marxists who are "building socialism with Chinese characteristics." Therefore "the dogmatic way of copying sentences from classic Marxism mechanically is impracticable." In looking at traditional concepts "it is necessary to decide which is to be absorbed and which is to be discarded. . . . Marxism is not a dogma but a guide to action."[42]

The bold nature of the Chinese experiments present a difficult ideological challenge to Gorbachov, who might wish to adopt some of these reforms in the Soviet Union. Professor Marshall Goldman has expressed this dilemma well: "The fact that the Chinese have acted first is awkward. Under the best of circumstances, it will be difficult for Gorbachov to follow the Chinese path, particularly if that path leads to what the rest of the world views as capitalism."[43]

The orthodoxy of Gorbachov's ideology is not only under attack from the Third World, but equally distressing is the continuing attack from communist parties in the advanced industrial democracies. For over a decade the "Eurocommunist" parties in the industrialized democracies, which include the Communist Party of Japan for example, have rejected important features of the Soviet model in favour of a communist party that can accept the principles of Western parliamentary democracy. The Italian communists, the most important Western party to pursue this strategy, almost but never quite achieved its goal of a *compromesso storico*, in which it would have shared governmental power with the Christian Democrats. Despite this setback the Italian Communist Party did not abandon Eurocommunism, with the result that it still maintains the loyalty of roughly a third of the Italian electorate. By way of contrast, the French communists, who had a brief, opportunistic flirtation with Eurocommunism in the mid-1970s, settled back as dedicated supporters of the Soviet model, with the result that they have now become isolated and impotent in French society.

Where, then, is Gorbachov free to impose the Soviet model of society? The answer, it would seem, is in his imperium of Eastern Europe. But even here an imperium where rule is based on military force has its limitations. Repeated Soviet military interventions in Eastern Europe have maintained Soviet control, but with considerable variations from the Soviet model. The most recent upheaval in Poland in 1980–81 so discredited the Polish Party that its ability to rule virtually evaporated. Poland had to be rescued by placing all power over the Party, state, army and secret police in the hands of a single strong man backed by the Soviet Army. This was scarcely the Soviet model of the Party reigning supreme, but the choice lay between abandoning the Soviet model or abandoning Poland.

Afghanistan, another part of the Soviet imperium, is obviously in the

[42] An Zhiguo, "Marxism Endures as Reason," *Beijing Review*, Vol. 29, No. 2, 13 Jan. 1986, p. 4.
[43] Goldman, "Gorbachev," op. cit. p. 58.

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grip of Soviet military control, even though much remains to complete its "pacification." Gorbachov candidly called it a "bleeding wound" and indicated that he would like to find some way to pull Soviet troops out of this morass. But even if the Afghan–Pakistan border could somehow be closed without the presence of Soviet soldiers, it is scarcely conceivable that the Soviet Army could really withdraw from Afghanistan without the power of the Afghan communists collapsing overnight.

FINALLY, the Soviet model might be imposed on more distant Third World countries. This has become possible by virtue of the Soviet ability to project its military power increasingly farther from home. But even here all is not well.

In January 1986 in South Yemen, for example, a fratricidal conflict erupted between two communist factions, both presumably loyal to Moscow. Begun as a gangland-style massacre of one faction's leadership by the other, the fighting quickly escalated within a 12-day period to kill an estimated 10,000–13,000 South Yemenites. All this, despite the fact that the Soviet Union had 1,000 of its own troops stationed in Aden and a secret police trained and guided by the East Germans, who invariably specialize in this function in Soviet controlled Third World countries. It was evident that large amounts of Soviet military aid to its overseas clients did not necessarily mean that Moscow was able to control them. Indeed, it was precisely the huge array of weapons the Soviet Union has poured into Aden that accounted for the enormous scale of the destruction by clients who were too well armed with Soviet guns.[44] The political consequences of this incident could only harm the Soviet cause among the Arab states.

The Soviet Union is a superpower because of its military might and an economy which is second only to that of the United States. Within the next decade Japan will surely surpass the Soviet Union as the second most powerful industrial country in the world. As the Soviet Union slips to third place economically, it will be more reliant than ever upon its vast military establishment to maintain its superpower status. At the same time the burden of empire will become more and more difficult to bear.

Ideologically, the Soviet Union, ever more a single dimension military power, will become less attractive as the model society for the world communist movement. Already under attack from China and other underdeveloped nations that might find the Chinese experiments congenial, from the Eurocommunists in the advanced industrial democracies, and even from the satellites within the Soviet imperium, Gorbachov's future place for the Soviet Party in the world communist movement would appear to be one of increasing isolation and diminishing influence.

[44] For a good summary of the details of this bloody incident, see John Kifner, "Massacre over Tea: Southern Yemen Conflict," *New York Times*, 9 Feb. 1986.

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Who is Afraid of Mikhail Gorbachov?

Paul Lendvai

DESPITE the unprecedented and spectacular growth of Soviet military power, the so-called "Soviet model" has become synonymous with political, economic and cultural decline not only in the West, but also throughout the Kremlin's East European empire. Soviet military strength may well be equal—many say superior even—to that of the United States. But in terms of economic leverage, artistic/scientific influence and social appeal, the Soviet system bears no serious comparison with conditions in modern Western societies. After six decades of central planning, despite the global role of a military world power, dramatic economic failure undermines the very legitimacy of a regime which was originally wedded to the Marxist principle of economic determinism. For all its successes in the pursuit of imperial grandeur, the Soviet Union, and with it more or less the entire "socialist community," is falling further and further behind the West not just in terms of advanced technology, but also in the quality of life. Besides consumer goods this involves other areas, largely ignored by the US media, such as hospitals, housing, schools, health care, welfare provisions, etc.

If, to all this, one adds its bleak record in human rights, one sees that it is not by accident, as *Pravda* might say, that Soviet society is not exactly capable of projecting an appealing image. There is also overwhelming evidence that nowhere have Marxist–Leninist ideology and slogans less appeal to nations and to ethnic groups than in Eastern Europe. It is against this general background that the series of public relations triumphs achieved by Mikhail Gorbachov in less than a year since his election as General Secretary must be assessed. He has already succeeded beyond the wildest expectations of seasoned communist propagandists in making a major impact on Western public opinion and world politics. Television dramatizes, magnifies and personalizes the issues in East–West relations too, sometimes with unexpected repercussions. Gorbachov may simply be the first Soviet leader to understand television and its potential both for building up his personal image of "youthful dynamism" and for conveying a "new Soviet message." After three consecutive leaders who were incapacitated for lengthy periods, unable even to carry out ceremonial public functions, the West was easy prey for a General Secretary some 20 years younger than his predecessors, capable not only of standing upright and actually moving, but also of speaking coherently and openly laughing. It is therefore understandable if regrettable that the media should be excessively preoccupied with the smiles of Mikhail, the fashions and hairstyle of Raisa Maksimovna and the doings of their daughter and grand-daughter.

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But as so often in the turbulent history of Soviet and international communism, it is not journalists or cameramen, but rather leading politicians and academic Sovietologists who produce and market the vital incentives for myth-making. Thus for Denis Healey, Mikhail Gorbachov is "a man of exceptional charm with a relaxed, self-deprecating sense of humour. Emotions flicker over a face of unusual sensitivity like summer breezes on a pond." For Healey (as indeed "for all who met him in Britain") he left only one "puzzling question: How can a man who appears so genuinely nice and human run the Soviet system?" The answer, as Healey suggests, might be found in his "immense authority"[1] . . .

Not to be left behind in the race to praise Gorbachov, an American Sovietologist calls him a "truly world-class chess player . . . of a quality that we have not seen for many decades . . . playing a very complex game." He is supremely confident in explaining both past power battles, stating for example that "the military and secret police . . . have as little right to become involved in factional politics in the Soviet Union as the American military and the FBI have in the United States," and also in proposing "what will be occurring and what is to come" under Gorbachov. The new men promoted by Gorbachov "are likely to support industrial growth and a change in social policy . . . in this sense, the policies of Gorbachov and Andropov are similar to Reaganism and Thatcherism"! He concludes that Gorbachov is "clearly playing the game of economic reform" and the only question is "to what extent does he have the independent goal of integrating Russia back into European civilization?"[2] The author has obviously given "serious thought to who Gorbachov is and where he is going." Unfortunately, his own track record in applied Sovietology and Kremlinology is not very encouraging—in a book devoted exclusively to "Soviet leadership in transition" and dealing with "a variety of succession patterns," this same author two years before Brezhnev's death failed even to mention the names of the two actual successors, Andropov and Chernenko among the likeliest candidates. Gorbachov was listed only as a distant fifth possibility, preceded by men who in the meantime have disappeared (Kirilenko, Grishin, Romanov etc.), losers in the obscure factional battles.[3] His claim of presenting many facts "never before available in the West" while succumbing both in 1980 and 1985 to rash generalizations and hasty speculations is in some respects typical of a certain trend among Western Sovietologists. It also recalls the old *bon mot* of a Polish journalist who in the late '50s visited several American think-tanks and

[1] *Newsweek*, 25 March 1985. For strikingly similar observations made about Stalin by the German writer Emil Ludwig, by H. G. Wells, Lion Feuchtwanger and by the American Ambassador Joseph Davies see Lilly Marcou, *Le Staline. Vue par les hôtes du Kremlin*, (Archives Gallimard/Julliard, Paris, 1979).

[2] Jerry F. Hough, "Gorbachov's Strategy," *Foreign Affairs* (New York, N.Y., Autumn 1985).

[3] See Jerry F. Hough, *Soviet Leadership in Transition* (The Brookings Institution, Washington, D.C., 1980), p. 154.

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on his return (calmly) remarked to a Swiss colleague: "They know so much—and they understand so little."

MANY misconceptions stem from the incredibly misleading vocabulary used by sections of the media and the academic community in discussion of communist affairs or East–West relations. Terms such as "reform," "peace" or "democracy" have in communist (or Soviet) parlance very different meanings from those held in the West. It is rarely made clear for example that "reform" for all communist leaders, even for such a moderate as Hungary's Janos Kadar, means within-the-system changes and by no means any basic or irreversible transformation of the power base.

Western observers who are so enthusiastic about Gorbachov's new broom should read the dispassionate, yet devastating analysis, newly published in Zagreb by one of Yugoslavia's foremost Soviet experts, Janez Stanic. Under the title *The Weak Spots of Socialism*,[4] his best-selling book about political tensions and social contradictions in the communist world warns that despite minor adjustments in the economy,

> no changes in the political and ideological system have been permitted. Even the most rigorous de-Stalinization in the Soviet Union at the beginning of the 1960s has never been dealt with and discussed in terms of a reform of the political system. Although some elements of such a reform were indeed apparent, they were [said to be] only corrections of errors committed in an allegedly perfect system . . . Contemporary socialism has nowhere abolished the division of society into those who rule and those who are ruled . . . A sharp conflict has emerged between the working class, the intelligentsia and other social strata not occupying positions of power, and other elites on the other.

Stanic explains that the "basic misunderstanding in all discussions on the essence of the Soviet system and similar democracies" lies in the fact that the Soviet leaders "understand democracy as the right and obligation of all citizens to carry out . . . a policy that is conceived exclusively by small groups of people stationed at the top of the pyramid."

Under the conditions of such a system, based on the Communist Party's claim to a monopoly of power *and* truth, peace is seen as a dynamic concept which must not be synonymous with the acceptance of the status quo, nor of stability in the imperialist camp. The absence of overt conflict does not entail any change in the Soviet vision of history's inexorable march towards the victory of "socialism" over "capitalism." No generational change in the ruling bureaucracy is likely in the conceivable future to alter the basic principle of Soviet foreign policy which regards as its supreme goal to change what is in Moscow called "the correlation of forces" between the two camps, between "them" and "us," not merely through the projection of sheer military power, but also

[4] *Bijele Pjege Socijalizma* (The Weak Spots of Socialism, Globus, Zagreb, 1985), pp. 54–74.

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through the combined use of diplomacy, the secret service and propaganda.

The confusion, the misunderstandings and even miscalculations concerning the distance between shadow and substance, the dialectics between the scope of and limits to changes within a Soviet-type single-party dictatorship cannot be solely explained by ignorance and/or the success of Soviet-sponsored propaganda and disinformation campaigns. Much of it, above all in the United States and West Germany, but not in France and Italy, is also the result of a chronic tendency to look at developments in the communist world through the prism of domestic policies. How else can one explain the fact that Western Sovietologists, who today trumpet assessments based on no conclusive evidence about Gorbachov's grand strategy of fundamental reforms or who see "light" coming "to dark corners of the Soviet Union," as long as five years ago urged the US "to offer some hope" to *any* new leadership so "that it can pursue a policy of economic reform, liberalization, and the reduction of military expenditures without national humiliation."[5] How else can one explain that even before the latest successions in Moscow, but after the invasion of Afghanistan wide segments of the European public considered the Soviet Union less of a danger than the prospect that reckless American policy under President Reagan might spark off nuclear war?

The fascination of the Western media, the academic profession and Western leaders with the personality, style, outlook and priorities of Gorbachov is bound to add continual fuel to what Arthur Koestler many years ago called the "fallacy of false equations" between a democratic if imperfect West, and a totalitarian East. This is not to say that the new Soviet leadership, faced with the agonizing choice between global ambitions and domestic needs, is not genuinely interested in a relaxation of international tensions, in seeking tranquillity both on the Western and Chinese flanks, as well as in renewing the flow of credits and access to Western technology.

The point is however that paradoxically both extremes of Western, and above all US, policies towards the Soviet bloc, swaying between almost total reliance on the "carrot" of permissive trade and credit policies coupled with unilateral political concessions and on the "stick" of threats, sanctions and verbal insults, stem from the same misunderstanding of the structure and workings of Soviet-type systems. The Soviet Union cannot be treated as just another foreign state. The ideology of Marxism–Leninism may be irrelevant and devoid of any impulse, but it remains as before the justification and principle of legitimacy for the Party bureaucracy, for the Soviet rule over historic nations in the guise of "internationalism" and last but not least, for the relentless expansion of its power sphere as the result of "the laws of the class struggle on a global scale."

[5] Hough, ibid. p. 166. See also Harrison E. Salisbury, "The View From Pasternak's Grave has Improved," *New York Times*, quoted in *International Herald Tribune*, 21 Dec. 1985.

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POST-WAR history has provided abundant evidence that the West does not and cannot create situations nor initiate processes of liberalization or emancipation in the Soviet bloc. From the Tito–Stalin break in 1948 to Khrushchev's de-Stalinization campaign and the Hungarian uprising in 1956, from the "Prague Spring" and the subsequent Soviet intervention in 1968 to the emergence of Polish Solidarity in 1980, the upheavels which have shattered the Soviet empire were not engendered by Western policy-makers and in most cases were not even anticipated by the Kremlinologists. What the West can and should do is to reinforce positive processes, to use bargaining power to discourage expansionist behaviour and to withhold economic benefits in pursuit of a concrete and limited goal, for example, in the humanitarian domain.

In any case, the balance sheet of the Gorbachov era so far appears to indicate that it would not only be naive but also politically dangerous to assume that generational changes in the top and middle echelons of Party and state bureaucracy are bound to have a liberalizing effect on policy-making. Nor should the higher degree of education and sophistication, of flexibility and even cynicism of the political elites be automatically identified with a genuine commitment to reformist and more liberal policies. There has been indeed a complete, even dramatic public break with the immobility and deceptive personal stability of the past, a move stage-managed, engineered and controlled by that same man who appeared so charming, so genuinely nice and human to Denis Healey. Let us look at the record. It is usually reckoned that (excluding special cases such as Andropov and Chernenko), the three previous General Secretaries, i.e. Stalin, Khrushchev and Brezhnev, who in all spent 60 years at the helm, each needed at least five years to eliminate their most dangerous rivals and gradually to attain absolute pre-eminence. No previous Soviet leader has ever been able to carry out such decisive shifts within the top echelons so quickly and to change the distribution of decision-making power in the Moscow centre of the ruling oligarchy so ruthlessly as has Gorbachov.

Only six weeks after his election as General Secretary, in March 1985, Gorbachov brought three new members at one stroke into the 12-member Politburo. In May he gave a blunt warning in a speech: "Those who do not intend to adjust and who, moreover, are an obstacle to the solution of these new tasks, must simply get out of the way, and not be a hindrance. We cannot regard the interests of one person higher than the interests of society as a whole." Heads began to roll in July and by the end of the year four voting members of the top Party body—Central Committee Secretary Romanov, Premier Tikhonov and Moscow Party Chief Grishin were retired or, as Foreign Minister Gromyko, kicked upstairs into the ceremonial position of the head of state. The extensive shake-up of personnel affected hundreds of key office-holders both in the centre and all over the country in the Party, state and military bureaucracy, followed by thousands, if not tens of thousands of changes

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(retirements, demotions and transfers) at the higher and middle levels.

In brief, a massive purge, initiated and controlled from the top, serves as the main lever for upward mobility and for a sweeping assault on the fossilized strongholds of inefficiency, loafing, nepotism and corruption. The once powerful office-holders—from Admiral Gorshkov, the architect of the Soviet Navy to Grishin, the Party Chief of the capital, from the top planner to numerous ministers and regional secretaries—all of whom had been in office for decades, were neither attacked publicly, nor thanked for their service. Biological laws have of course facilitated the bloodless shake-up of the Old Guard. If Brezhnev was the symbol of stability declining into stagnation, so Gorbachov now seeks to project the image of youthful dynamism with the emphasis on discipline as a built-in safeguard against potential turmoil.

THE pace, form and style of the personal changes appear to confirm Gromyko's oft-quoted remark (albeit omitted from the official version reprinted in the Party monthly *Kommunist*) from his speech recommending Gorbachov's election to the Central Committee: "He has a pleasant smile, but he has teeth of iron." Though the General Secretary has a long way to go before becoming the absolute and undisputed master and though realignments and splits within a ruling group in transition can never be excluded, the speed of his rise to the very top and his leadership style are significant straws in the wind that this man from the Caucasus with a peasant background may in time emerge as the most powerful Soviet leader since Stalin.

It is therefore of some importance that quite a few observers in Eastern Europe, who know the workings of the communist system intimately, both at the national and international level, are voicing opinions about the so-called "Gorbachov strategy" which are very different from the conventional Western versions widespread in the academic profession and in the media. They are sceptical, uneasy and apprehensive, in some cases even alarmed, about the way in which the leadership seeks to impose modernization on a complex society without first making profound changes in the old structures and institutions. Publicly no one east of the Elbe would dare to go so far as Janez Stanic, the Yugoslav commentator, who in a recent interview stated that Gorbachov had "no feeling for human problems," and drew some intriguing comparisons:[6]

> Gorbachov has been waging a campaign in the same way that Ivan the Terrible managed his *oprichnina* [his special police apparatus]. Peter the Great carried out the move from Moscow to St. Petersburg, or Stalin introduced industrialization. This tradition of disrespect for human beings in general and individuals in particular is now coming to the surface in a quite different area and in a different

[6] Interview with *Studentski List*, Zagreb, 24 Oct. 1985.

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> way—but the spirit is the same. This is why I think that Gorbachov has not understood that discipline is not the most important thing.

This is a far cry from the Western reports that Gorbachov's election was greeted with great enthusiasm "by nearly all of the political elites in Eastern Europe except traditional ideology die-hards." Having been by chance in Prague on the day Brezhnev's death was announced, and two and a half years later in Budapest on the day Chernenko's death and Gorbachov's election was made public, I would not dare to make such sweeping statements. Quite apart from the gross error of lumping together internally diverse states of varying degrees of stability or instability, and which differ in the relationship of the local to the Soviet leaders, the truth of the matter is that, according to some unpublished surveys, public opinion tends to respond to a leadership change in the far-away centre of the empire with a mixture of ingrained uncertainty and vague hope, often overshadowed by an instinctive fear of the unknown and possible repercussions upon personal life. My own impression of the immediate impact in each case was of a wait-and-see attitude and above all relief among the initiated "elite contacts" that neither Grishin nor Romanov had made it.

To caution against exaggerated expectations does not necessarily mean for example that in Hungary the reformist nucleus both in the leadership and the broader groups of the scientific technocratic elite did not welcome Gorbachov's selection. Even the advocates of much more limited experimentation in East Germany or Bulgaria sighed with relief that a more dynamic representative of a new generation of Soviet leaders had at long last been chosen.

The passage of time, however, has produced a subtle change of mood in the client states. My own visits to Poland, Hungary, Romania and Yugoslavia as well as innumerable conversations with Soviet, German and Bulgarian visitors to the West indicate a growing apprehension and resentment of Gorbachov's bloc-wide "get-tough" disciplinary campaign and underlying fears about its repercussions. The new strains emerging in the relationship between the Soviet Union and its client states in Eastern Europe and the future impact of this new Soviet phenomenon of an assertive, self-confident and dynamic centre cannot yet be measured. What we do know with certainty is that the implications are both intricate and explosive. In view of the present business-as-usual atmosphere of law and order in Eastern Europe, the following sombre assessment may appear over-dramatic and alarmist, particularly in the eyes of those who expect great things from the Gorbachov era. But past experiences and present developments provide cogent grounds for believing that closer attention should be paid to the potentially disruptive political, social and economic consequences of a new tactical line in the framework of the old grand strategy aimed at the combination of the *illusion* of genuine *détente* in the West with the *reality* of hegemony in the East.

A fact often overlooked is that for a variety of reasons the Soviets, in

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their drive to subvert Western unity without jeopardizing the cohesion of their immediate power sphere, have time and again encountered more difficulties from East European societies than from Western governments. This is the reason why the increasingly evident dualism in Soviet foreign policy, seeking to combine a limited accommodation with the West with an intensification of control over Eastern Europe, may create a dangerous situation with unpredictable consequences.

AS IN the mid-50s, political change in the heart of a multi-national empire may also mark a major watershed in the ways in which imperial rule, control and coordination are imposed on its client states. The Soviet search for a politically safe balance between the optimal degree of centralization of decision-making in Moscow, and the optimal degree of domestic autonomy has often engendered a vicious circle in which pressures and counter-pressures have led to previously "unthinkable" upheavals. Cataclysmic events have repeatedly provoked the use or threat of Soviet military force for policing functions. The credibility of this deterrent has at the same time enabled the imperial centre to tolerate certain deviations or to display a surprising degree of flexibility and subtlety (for example during the volatile period of 1980–82 in Poland).

But despite the long spells of deceptively quiet periods inside the empire and the global spread of Soviet power, the East European communist client states have remained, both as assets and as vulnerable points, the central preoccupation of the Soviet leadership. The vital importance of bloc cohesion in Soviet policy concerns was reaffirmed by Gorbachov himself in his very first policy statement delivered at the plenary meeting after his election as General Secretary. An unprecedented series of three Warsaw Pact summit meetings, two Comecon conferences at prime ministerial level, bilateral consultations between Gorbachov and all East European leaders (except Romania's Ceausescu) and various gatherings of the Central Committee secretaries in charge of economics, ideology, propaganda and foreign affairs, all taking place between April and December 1985, provided an almost dramatic reminder that the long period of "benign neglect" under feeble or passive leaderships in the Kremlin is irrevocably past.

The scope and limits to the external autonomy and international diversity of the client states both reflect and shape the given degree of stability or instability in a particular country. Yet ultimately it is the changing criteria in Moscow for deciding what is essential to Soviet security interests that determines how far and how fast a ruling party within the bloc can embark upon the road of economic and political experimentation, including even limited openings towards the West. That is why the reassertion of the absolute primacy of Soviet great-power interests behind a smokescreen of the usual noises about solidarity and unity heightens the risks and narrows the options available to the ruling bureaucracies for maintaining stability during a difficult and volatile

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period. Thus the Gorbachov strategy may potentially pose the most dangerous and politically the most significant challenge to the rulers of the client states since Stalin's death.

The essential point is that, despite its enormous domestic economic and social problems, the Soviet system provides a model of stability in comparison with the regimes of Eastern Europe. In the Soviet Union the Party has successfully identified itself with the pursuit of imperial grandeur in general and with Russian patriotism and national pride in particular, albeit at the cost of rising ethnic tensions in the non-Russian regions. But the simple point, so often brushed aside, is that communism in Central and Eastern Europe (except in the special and complex cases of Yugoslavia and Albania) is not a national but an artificial and profoundly anti-national system, imposed and upheld by an alien super-power.

The key question of legitimacy constitutes the deepest structural source of many if not all problems. The basic political reality of the 1980s, which neither shifts of mood nor tactical concessions should be allowed to obscure, is a Soviet military presence as far west as the Elbe and four of the six Warsaw Pact partners ranking (40 years after the Second World War) as occupied countries, with a fifth—Bulgaria—subjected to total Soviet military and political domination. For all the diversity of international policies and the enormous difference between the atmosphere in Hungary and in Czechoslovakia or Poland, Soviet military power remains as before the ultimate guarantor of the very existence of the East European communist systems.

A realistic Western policy always needs to pay attention to what has *not* changed within the Eastern bloc, and within the systems, as well as to what has changed. Take for example Hungary. Despite her bold economic experiments, moderate domestic politics and relative freedom of movement, her political mechanism is still essentially the same as in all other bloc countries. Despite permissiveness in culture and the media alongside candid discussion of previously taboo subjects such as the Stalin era or anti-semitism, the ruling party continues to claim a monopoly of power and truth. It still lacks legitimacy; its survival depends in the final analysis on fear of Soviet intervention.

Soviet hegemonial power is designed to act as a brake on the forces of turbulence within the inner core of the realm, that is East Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Bulgaria. However, the very basis of imperial power—the stationing of Soviet troops—is simultaneously the most powerful symbol of national resentment, continuously feeding the fire of anti-Soviet nationalism. Soviet misunderstanding of the strength of East European nationalism coupled with the failure to infuse classical great-power policy with ideological and missionary fervour entails the serious danger of destabilizing the bloc as a whole, of compounding social and economic strains and last but not least of eroding the very basis of the partially successful attempts made by some local ruling groups to foster national pride and identification.

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The current reassessment of the Soviet political, economic and ideological interests in this vital region takes place within the context of global strategy, at a time of a more vigorous, more enterprising strategy vis-à-vis the United States, Western Europe and Asia, but also against the background of succession problems and economic crisis throughout the bloc. So long as the key security interests of the Soviet Union are adequately protected and respected, much may be tolerated in terms of autonomy and diversity in the client states. But just how much and when do the aspirations of the client states reach the point where the new Gorbachov leadership sees its priorities, its essential interests at stake?

The indications are that the Soviet sphere of action is steadily increasing, and that the conflicts between external restraints and domestic aspirations, the manifold economic and political frictions within the bloc as a whole will be exacerbated rather than curbed. The Soviet leaders have made it clear both publicly and privately that "common interest demands a deepening of cooperation in politics, economics, ideology and by all means in such a domain as defence." This was stated last summer by the Politburo member and Central Committee Secretary, Yegor Ligachev, generally regarded as the second most powerful figure. He also made it clear in another speech that any changes would take place "within the framework of scientific socialism without shifts towards a market economy or private enterprise."[7]

The emerging line was spelled out in several lengthy editorials in *Pravda*, varying somewhat in emphasis and style, and also variously interpreted. Articles in other authoritative journals also reflected changes in what is called in communist parlance "the interpretation of national and international interests within the socialist community." In other words, during this period of transition differences have emerged concerning the *tactical* approach to the question of local autonomy, including change in the response to the sensitivities and complaints of the smaller client states. It would, however, be wrong to exaggerate the significance of these covert debates about tactical shifts.[8]

What really matters is the general line towards the tightening of control and coordination, not just militarily, but also in the political and economic sense. The drive for greater coordination of foreign economic policies has become evident both in bilateral relations, that is between the Soviet hegemonial centre and each client state separately and in the multilateral framework. Gorbachov is understood to have told the rulers of the client states that "socialist internationalism" means that the "fraternal states should speak on major issues with a single voice." In

[7] His speeches were reported on 1 and 29 June 1985.

[8] See particularly the lengthy piece by O. Vladimirov in *Pravda*, 21 June 1985. It is presumed that the author was actually Oleg B. Rakhmanin, first deputy head of the CC department in charge of the ruling parties. The article was not reprinted either in Hungary or Poland. After complaints allegedly by Kadar and Honecker, Nikolai Shishlin, an advisor to Gorbachov wrote a more balanced piece for the weekly *New Times*, No. 35, 1985, which was prominently displayed in the Hungarian Party daily, *Nepszabadsag*. However, the general thrust of Soviet warning was reaffirmed in *Pravda* on 18 Oct. and 14 Dec., on the eve of Secretary of State Schultz's visit to Bucharest, Budapest and Belgrade.

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other words, the small nations cannot play an independent role "sowing confusion and misunderstanding, even miscalculations in the perceptions of imperialist leaders," as a high-ranking Soviet official put it in a background conversation. In brief, the pace of East–West dialogue should be set and controlled only by the Moscow centre. The entire conduct of the bloc in international affairs will be more closely monitored and subordinated to the clear priority of Soviet state interests.

DESPITE the grave security and economic implications of the Polish crisis, one could argue that the Gorbachov leadership is better placed to deal with centrifugal tendencies within the bloc than is anticipated in some Western studies. Here are some of the key positive factors from a Soviet point of view:

a) There is a total absence of any coordinated Western alliance or even a US strategy towards the Soviet Union and its empire;
b) The reaction of the West Europeans after the crackdown in Poland and recurring disagreements in the Alliance over sanctions prove that West European desire for dialogue (and business) will always be stronger than the wish to punish aggression against countries already dominated by the Soviet Union;
c) The outcome of the Polish crisis so far has been a major success, where military rule imposed by General Jaruzelski combined with the threat of a Soviet invasion have staved off the collapse of the system in the heart of the empire without the use of force;
d) In contrast to the early 1970s, the cohesion of the inner core of the Soviet power sphere in Europe is no longer threatened in any way by the activist policy of Yugoslavia and Romania. For a variety of reasons (economic crisis, national tensions, human rights record, Tito's death and Ceausescu's increasingly bizarre cult of personality, etc.) both countries have lost their erstwhile appeal for the client states. In fact, the domestic basis of the Romanian road to independence has been eroded to such an extent that its potential for troublemaking within the Warsaw Pact and Comecon is virtually extinct.

This brings us to the problem of authoritative leadership and succession at the very top which constitutes a key source of instability for communist regimes which lack legitimacy and are subject to a high degree of operational control maintained by the Soviet Union over the army, security services, diplomacy and the key departments of the Central Committee apparatus in each Warsaw Pact country (except probably still Romania). The rejuvenation in the Kremlin has produced a novel situation. The impending succession problems directly affect the mechanism of crisis management and thus also the cohesion of the Soviet empire as a whole. Every crisis in the client states between 1953–82 has been created by a combination of complex factors—but never without a split or power struggle among the top leaders.

The question of whether a particular ruling group can ride out a factional battle depends on the degree of operational connexion between

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the rival contenders and the Kremlin, or more precisely, "informal groups" appointed by Moscow within such key institutions as the Party apparatus, the military and secret service bureaucracy etc. It is certain that the changes in Moscow have already stimulated the race for power in Hungary, East Germany, Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia. The Hungarian Secretary General Janos Kadar will be 74 in May; Todor Zhivkov, the Bulgarian President and Party Chief, will be 75 in September. Erich Honecker, their counterpart in East Germany, and Gustav Husak of Czechoslovakia are both 73 years old.

Thus it is likely that in these four countries within the next few years new leaders will emerge whose political outlook, priorities, abilities and personal style are largely unknown. It may be taken for granted that everywhere impatient power-hungry Party officials, mainly between 50 and 60 years old, are waiting in the wings convinced that they could become a Hungarian or Bulgarian Gorbachov! With a relatively young leadership in Moscow, Gorbachov and his closest lieutenants are certain to give the decisive word in the absence of any institutionalized mechanism for the transfer of power. This means of course that the succession process throughout the Eastern bloc is bound to generate great political hazards, automatically leading to an increase and not a reduction of Moscow's control at the policy-making level.

The role of personalities is far from negligible. On the contrary, the relative successes achieved by the Hungarian regime in gaining popular acceptance at home and a measure of international recognition, as well as the grave setbacks to Romania's external and domestic policies in the 1980s, have been largely due to the startlingly different leadership abilities and styles of Janos Kadar and Nicolae Ceausescu. The question of succession is everywhere wide open. This means the impending end of an unprecedented leadership continuity in most client states. Kadar has dominated Hungarian politics since 1956; Zhivkov has been, since 1954, nominally and since 1962, *de facto*, the strong man of Bulgaria; since 1971 Honecker has been Number One in East Germany. Though the power position of Husak in Prague cannot be compared to that of his colleagues, he has been, since 1969 as Party Chief and since 1975 as President, the key figure within a peculiar "collective leadership" and his departure from the political scene will inevitably unlock the Pandora's box of open factional infighting in Czechoslovakia.

A rapid and massive leadership turnover in the next few years in Eastern Europe at the very time when Gorbachov's strategy is aiming, by means of a two-pronged all-out offensive, to speed up economic integration throughout the bloc is a process fraught with dangers. A series of bilateral agreements, already concluded, and a comprehensive programme adopted at an extraordinary Comecon summit in December 1985 in Moscow provide for intensified cooperation up to the year 2000 in electronics, automation systems, nuclear energy, new technologies and biotechnology. The blueprint envisages an accelerated integration of

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each East European economy into the more backward and (as yet at any rate) unreformed economy of the hegemonial power. At the same time Gorbachov and the new men around him are determined to put more force into the decision-making functions and integrating competence of the Comecon bodies.

These are not abstract matters for specialists in Western chanceries and at universities, but fateful choices, sooner or later in one way or another affecting the daily life of over 110 million people in the six smaller Warsaw Pact states. The fact should not be overlooked that even though most of Khrushchev's and Brezhnev's plans for "comprehensive integration" have remained on paper, the Moscow-imposed priorities based on the assumption of underemployed resources and inexhaustible Soviet energy supplies have sufficed to cause havoc in Eastern Europe. Visitors to Hungary and Bulgaria for example have heard hair-raising stories about the collapse of the Eastern bloc power grid system during the catastrophic winter conditions of 1984–85, the power shortages caused by sudden breakdowns and drastic reductions in Soviet oil and gas deliveries as well as about recurrent bitter rows over the "stealing" of energy in a crisis situation through the Czechs and Romanians to the detriment of the Hungarians, Bulgarians and, in the case of the joint Danube Iron Gates power complex, also of the Yugoslavs.

It may well be that in the 1970s the East European countries, instead of being an asset, were rather a drain on Soviet resources as a result of the intra-Comecon price regulations under which they paid less than world market prices for Soviet oil and allegedly were overpaid for poor quality machines and products. Under the conditions of an all-pervading secretiveness and a price system that everywhere distorts relative scarcities, it is very difficult indeed to ascertain who exploits whom in commerce between fraternal Comecon member states. In any case, the terms of trade in the 1980s have changed dramatically and the bargaining power of the Soviets has become, in economic terms, as well, incomparably stronger.[9]

But quite apart from academic discussions about the client states being (temporarily!) a burden or a benefit to the imperial power, personal experiences as well as opinion surveys tend to confirm the validity of de Tocqueville's observation that "in politics one must use the same type of reasoning as in war and never forget that the effects of events depend less on themselves than on the impression they give . . ." No amount of statistics could convince the average East European citizen of the advantages of trade and integration with the Soviet Union or of the superiority of Soviet-type systems. While the Russians might more or less willingly pay the price for the pursuit of imperial grandeur, for the Hungarians, Poles, East Germans and Czechs the adjustment to the

[9] See particularly Paul Marer, "The political economy of Soviet relations with Eastern Europe," in *Soviet Policy in Eastern Europe*, Sarah Meiklejohn Terry (ed.), (Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1984), pp. 155–188.

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Soviet model and priorities, the burden of global expansion and the cost of supporting Third World allies must seem the main causes of their declining or at best stagnating standards of living.

With domestic resources and labour reserves exhausted, Soviet energy supplies curbed or becoming prohibitively expensive and Western credits dried up, the future looks gloomy for all client states. Chronic economic difficulties raise the critical problem of credibility for "future-oriented" systems which, guided by Marxism–Leninism, can only commit "temporary errors." The degree and dimensions of the estrangement of key social groups from the system depends on factors such as, among others, the starting levels of proximity to it, the style and authority of the given leadership, the gap between objective change and official claims, the conjuncture with other points of instability and last but not least the availability of comparisons.

One may wonder whether those in charge of bloc management in the Kremlin are still aware of the fact that East Germans, Hungarians and Poles rioted and revolted over conditions which were (and still are) superior to those in the Soviet Union. Thus in 1980 for example the per capita meat consumption in Poland was actually at least one third higher than the average figure officially given for the Soviet Union. Even *Pravda* recently praised the Hungarians for producing per capita some 150 kilogrammes of meat, forgetting of course to mention that this was almost three times higher than the comparable Soviet figure.

But East Germans, Hungarians, Poles, Czechs and Slovaks do not compare their living standards or their levels of housing, health care and transportation with those prevailing in Stavropol, Sverdlovsk or even Moscow. For them the yardstick whether they are "better off" is in comparison with Austria or West Germany. There is overwhelming statistical and visual evidence that the gap between even the relatively most successful client states, that is East Germany and Hungary, on the one hand and their West German and Austrian neighbours on the other has substantially widened.[10]

THE material, moral and psychological failure of these regimes must be viewed against the background of the emerging successor generation in each bloc country with different political experiences, different values and cultural choices, changing life styles and a growing sense of social disorientation. The disenchantment and alienation of the youth and the intelligentsia are profoundly affected by greatly increased tourist, cultural and economic contacts with the West. The audio-visual

[10] According to calculations compiled by an Austrian economist, real wages per capita of employed in Hungary fell from 57 per cent in 1965 to 38 per cent in 1982 of the Austrian level on the basis of purchasing power parities. With regard to the Soviet Union, the gap widened from 45 to 33 per cent. Benedykt Askanas, "Level and Development of Real Wages in the CMEA Countries Compared to Austria." (The Vienna Institute for Comparative Economic Studies, No. 103, Vienna, Jan. 1985 in German). For East and West Germany, see Werner Obst, *Reiz der Idee—Pleite der Praxis. Ein deutsch-deutscher Wirtschaftsvergleich*, (Edition Interfrom, Osnabrück, Zürich, 1983).

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communication revolution, international radio broadcasts in East European languages, news and feature television broadcasts during international and domestic crises from West Germany and Austria, as well as the video boom, threaten to create insurmountable problems of credibility for the leaderships.

Recent events in Romania and Poland (but also in non-aligned Yugoslavia) should provide salutary lessons that the limitation of contacts to state bankers, planning bureaucrats and carefully selected visiting scholars alone is deceptive and can be counter-productive. The truth of the matter is that communism (whatever variety you take) has struck no roots and the ideology, which continues to have a crucial legitimizing function, exerts virtually no influence. The ideological vacuum, credibility gap, generational change and disenchantment in the human sense have combined to engender nationalistic and religious revivals to varying degrees in each country with the potential to create hotbeds of tensions between neighbours and to fracture multinational societies.

The Gorbachov era is proving extraordinarily complicated and risky for the ruling groups caught between conflicting pressures from below and from outside. They have to pose as defenders and advocates of tangible national interests in order to gain a modicum of acceptance and to strengthen internal cohesion in a critical period. Yet at the same time all of them, the ageing Number Ones and the younger contenders have to retain the confidence of their ultimate protectors in the Kremlin. Therein lies their basic dilemma, recalling the words of Edmund Burke that "most political decisions are a choice between the disagreeable and the intolerable."

The future dimensions of unrest and even upheaval within the East European empire depend on changing Soviet priorities, the assessment of the risks in each client state and such imponderables as the personalities in power and their ability to do business with the new rulers in Moscow. In contrast to widespread speculation in the West it is not efforts at domestic modernization coupled with limited experiments but rather the assertive and well-coordinated bloc strategy under Gorbachov which is likely to have a short and medium-term impact on the inner core of the Soviet power sphere.

The straws in the wind are not very promising. At the December meeting of the prime ministers and high-ranking officials from the Comecon member states (thus also from Cuba, Vietnam and Mongolia plus assorted overseas dependencies), Gorbachov warned that the Soviet Party regarded the implementation of the integration programme as a "political task of paramount importance" for the next 15 years in order for the bloc to achieve "technological independence from and invulnerability to pressure and blackmail on the part of imperialism." In other words, the Gorbachov leadership regards the growing financial and technological dependence of the smaller states on the West as a serious potential threat to bloc cohesion and by implication to imperial control.

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IT remains to be seen how far and how fast Gorbachov will go on other highly sensitive matters such as, for example, more equitable burden-sharing. On the one hand, all Western calculations agree that per capita defence spending by most smaller Warsaw Pact states is five to ten times less than the corresponding figure for the Soviet Union. On the other, the danger of unrest in the client states places obvious constraints on increased defence spending. The same considerations apply to the problem of bloc aid for overseas and distant fraternal countries and radical Third World states, with the Soviets putting up 80 per cent so far and East Germany 10 per cent of the aggregate costs.[11] Finally, the Soviet side has already imposed more stringent terms on the interested partners in financing costly investments in developing oil, gas and iron ore deposits on Soviet territory.

To what extent is this hard-line policy compatible with political and social stability and economic viability in the East European states? Gorbachov appears to feel strong enough to impress upon the client rulers the Soviet claim to the leadership of the world system, the "socialist camp." In retrospect, the immobility of the feeble and ailing leaderships in the Kremlin may turn out to have been a blessing for rulers and ruled in the client states in comparison with the unpredictable consequences of the dynamic and assertive way in which Gorbachov deals with intra-bloc affairs.

The pace of changes, shake-ups and streamlining both in domestic politics and bloc management indicate that Gorbachov feels strong enough to reject the option of muddling through between stagnation and turmoil. Yet it is not in Russia itself, but inside a restive empire that miscalculations could bring the accumulated tinder to the point of explosion. Despite the overhauled machine of imperial control, new upheavals in this volatile part of the world cannot be excluded. In a real sense, this is the underlying reason why quite a few thoughtful East Europeans are afraid of the same man on whom so many in the West pin their hopes.

[11] See "The Military Balance," (The International Institute for Strategic Studies, London, 1985), pp. 16–20 and p. 170, also John Van Oudenaren, "The Soviet Union and Eastern Europe," (Rand Corporation, March 1984), p. 31.

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3/4

(formerly Lo Spettatore Internazionale)
A quarterly journal of the Istituto Affari Internazionali
Viale Mazzini 88 - 00195 Rome (Italy)

Editor: *Gianni Bonvicini* - Asst. Ed.: *Gabriele Tonne*

Volume XX Number 3/4 **July-December 1985**

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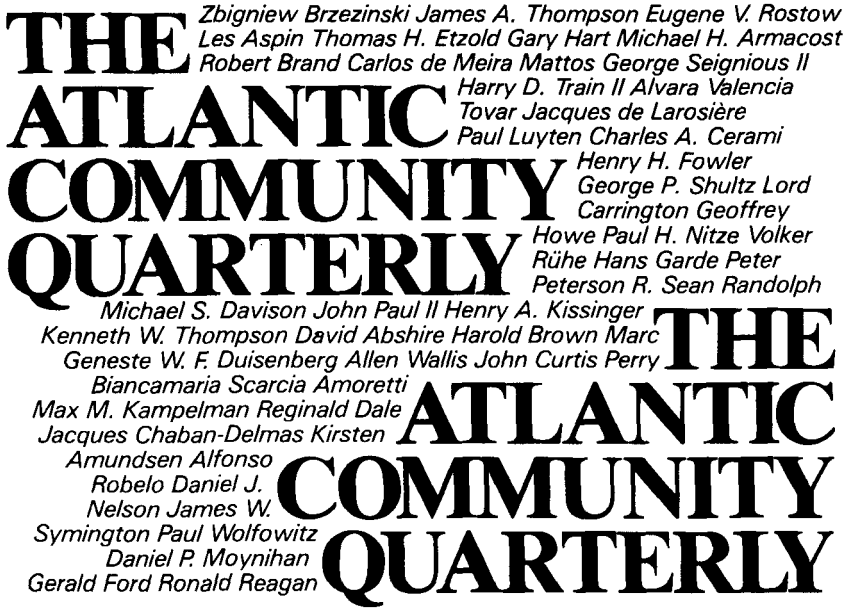
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